

Units 3 & 4 Writing worksheet

GOAL: write a summary of an article for a student magazine.

Include: a reference; expressions for presenting points in a summary. Use your own words.

1 Review the title and key words of an article from *Life* Unit 3, page 39. What ideas and details from the text do you remember?

Love and death in the sea

sea	respect	storm	water
waves	swim	breathe	
life	thank	learn	

2 Read the article from *Life* Unit 3, page 39. Compare your ideas from Exercise 1 with the information in the text.

The sea has almost killed me a couple of times. It wasn't her fault; it was mine, for not respecting her.¹ I still remember the last time, a stormy day off the Costa Brava of Spain, in early summer 2008. Every time I think about it, my heart races and my guts jump to my throat.

The cove where I used to swim every day was hit by a storm with strong eastern winds. The turquoise, transparent waters of summer quickly transformed into a dirty soup of sand and cold grey water.² Unfriendly waves were breaking in chaotic patterns. But beyond the surf zone the sea seemed swimmable. In a moment of Catalan bravado, I put on my swimming suit, mask and fins, and got into the water. It was crazy, but I did it. I swallowed mouthfuls of sand and salt while I was trying to break through the surf zone. Unpleasantly fighting, I swam – I still don't know why – for twenty minutes. The storm got worse and I decided to call it a day. I turned to swim back. Then I realised I couldn't get to the beach.

Waves were breaking all around me. I tried to bodysurf one wave to the shore, but it collapsed suddenly and took me down under the water. When I surfaced to take a breath, I turned around and a second wave hit me just as hard, taking me down again. I hit the sandy bottom. I pushed myself up, but once again, waves were coming and I couldn't rest or breathe. I was caught in the surf zone, with waves pushing me out and a current pulling me in. I wasn't getting any closer to the beach.

³ The sea is our mother, sister and home, and as such I love her. We get so much from the sea. She gives us life, oxygen, food. She regulates the climate and she makes ours a wonderful life. We should thank the sea, the ocean, every day. Without the ocean and all the life in it, our planet would be much poorer. But on this day, I was having a hard time feeling grateful.

After a few more attempts, I decided to let myself go and give up the fight. I took a deep breath. The next wave took me down and forward. I hit the bottom with my back. I rolled over, hit my head, and after what seemed the longest minute of my life, I found myself lying in a foot of water. I scrambled out of the water and onto the beach. ⁴ I'd got out, but I had lost my mask, snorkel and one fin. My whole body was sore, as if a gang of boxers had punched me viciously. I sat on the beach, breathless, watching the sea and feeling lucky to be alive. I walked back home slowly, ears down like a beaten dog.

⁵ Some days the sea wants us and some days she doesn't. Since that day, I have not been to the sea when she does not want me. I have learned my lesson. I now thank the sea every day the surface is calm, the waters are clear and diving is easy. And I ask for forgiveness every time I dive and see no fish.

Writing skill writing a summary

A summary gives the important ideas of a text. It is always much shorter than the original text. The summary includes:

The main idea – this is the most important point of the text. It is often (but not always) in the opening paragraph.

Supporting points – these important points support the main idea. You find them throughout the text. Sometimes an example provides a supporting point.

In the original text, you will often see additional examples, small details and extra descriptions. You do not need to include these in your summary.

3 Look at the three underlined sections of the text in Exercise 2. Which section contains the main idea?

4 Find the sentences numbered 1–5 from the text in Exercise 2. Which two are supporting points (SP) and which three are details and examples (DE)?

1 ____

2 ____

3 ____

4 ____

5 ____

Writing mechanics using your own words

Key words and phrases in a text can help you understand the main idea. Look for these when you read. The key words are often repeated words or synonyms.

We should thank the sea, the ocean, every day. Without the ocean and all the life in it, our planet would be much poorer. But on this day, I was having a hard time feeling grateful.

In summaries, you can include key words and phrases from the original text. However, you must put these key words and phrases in your own sentences. Avoid copying whole sentences from the original text.

~~The cove where I used to swim every day was hit by a storm with strong eastern winds.~~

One day, on his daily swim, there was a big storm.

5 Read four supporting points from the text in Exercise 2 and identify key words and phrases. Then rewrite the sentences.

1 The sea has almost killed me a couple of times. It wasn't her fault; it was mine, for not respecting her.

2 I sat on the beach, breathless, watching the sea and feeling lucky to be alive. I walked back home slowly, ears down like a beaten dog.

3 Since that day, I have not been to the sea when she does not want me. I have learned my lesson.

4 I now thank the sea every day the surface is calm, the waters are clear and diving is easy.

6 Now read a summary of *Love and death in the sea*. Compare your sentences from Exercise 5 to those in the summary.

The article is about how important the sea is, but also how dangerous it is. To show how we should respect the ocean, the author gives an example of when he nearly died while swimming off the coast of Spain, in 2008.

The writer tells us about his experience of swimming to shore in a storm and nearly drowning. He acknowledges how lucky he was to survive.

The author finishes by describing the lesson he learned: if the sea looks dangerous, don't swim. We need to respect and appreciate the sea, and thank it for everything it gives us.

Writing mechanics adding a reference

When we write a summary, we should refer to the original text.

The writer says ...

The author tells us ...

We can also give a reference at the end. This includes the author, the title, where the article is from and the date.

Reference:

Enric Sala, *Love and death in the sea*, reproduced in *Life* Intermediate Student Book, National Geographic Learning, 2013

7 Write a reference using the information from the box below.

2013

A better life?

Peter Hessler

Life Intermediate Student Book,

National Geographic Learning

WRITE

8 Read the title and the first paragraph from the article in *Life* Unit 4, page 51. Underline the main idea. Circle key words and phrases.

A better life

The beginning of a Chinese factory town is always the same: in the beginning nearly everybody is a construction worker. The growing economy means that everything moves fast and new industrial districts rise in several stages. Those early labourers are men who have migrated from rural villages and immediately they are joined by small entrepreneurs. These pioneers sell meat, fruit and vegetables on informal stalls, and later, when the first real shops appear, they stock construction materials. After that, cellphone companies arrive: China Mobile, China Unicom. They sell prepaid phonecards to migrants; in the south-eastern province of Zhejiang, one popular product is called the Homesick Card. When the factories start production, you start to see women. Young women have a reputation for being hard-working. After the arrival of the women, the clothes shops appear. An American poet once described an industrial town in the USA as 'springing up, like the enchanted palaces of the Arabian tales, as it were in a single night.' Today it's the factory towns of China that seem to belong to another world. The human energy is amazing: the courageous entrepreneurs, the quick-moving builders, the young migrants. A combination of past problems and present-day opportunities has created an extremely motivated population. Most people in China have seen their standard of living go up in recent years.

9 Read the rest of *A better life* on page 51. Use note form and key words and phrases to complete the plan for a summary.

Summary plan

Main idea

.....

Supporting points

.....

.....

.....

.....

Reference

.....

.....

10 Look at the *Key language* box. Which expressions does the writer use in the text in Exercise 6?

Key language expressions for presenting points in a summary

Introduction

The article describes / is about ...

Main points

The writer states ...

The author tells us / thinks that ...

Supporting points

The author compares / gives the example of ...

One example is ...

Conclusion

The author finishes / ends by ...

To conclude ...

11 Write your summary of *A better life* for a student magazine, using about 80–100 words. Use your plan and expressions from the *Key language* box.

12 Read your partner's work and tick (✓) the checklist.

Has your partner ...

- ☐ ... included the main and supporting points?
- ☐ ... summarised the text in his or her own words?
- ☐ ... included a reference to the original text?
- ☐ ... used expressions for presenting points in a summary?