

# Writing an Effective Summary

Follow these steps to write an effective summary:

Write down the topic, or subject, of the summary.

1. **LIST**: Make a list of important ideas.
2. **CROSS-OUT**: Cross out any unnecessary, weak, or repetitive ideas.
3. **CONNECT**: Connect ideas that could go in one sentence.
4. **NUMBER**: Number the ideas in the order that they will appear in the paragraph.
5. **WRITE**: Write the paragraph.
6. **EDIT**: Revise and proofread the paragraph. *Did you say what you wanted to say? Did you say it how you wanted to say it? Will others understand?*
7. **WRITE** the final draft in your neatest handwriting and indent.

EXAMPLE: Penguins' Birth

## 1. **LIST** important ideas.

Penguins' birth

- male takes care of egg
- female lays egg
- female leaves
- female spends winter at sea
- the water is very cold
- male puts egg on his feet under belly
- male stays on egg for two months
- female leaves, male cares for baby
- male doesn't eat
- egg hatches
- male must care for baby

## 3. **CONNECT** ideas that could go in one sentence.

Penguins' birth

- male takes care of egg
- female lays egg
- female leaves
- female spends winter at sea
- ~~the water is very cold~~
- ~~female leaves, male cares for baby~~
- male puts egg on his feet under belly
- male stays on egg for two months
- male doesn't eat
- egg hatches
- male must care for baby

## 2. **CROSS-OUT** necessary, weak, or repetitive ideas.

Penguins' birth

- male takes care of egg
- female lays egg
- female leaves
- female spends winter at sea
- ~~the water is very cold~~
- ~~female leaves, male cares for baby~~
- male puts egg on his feet under belly
- male stays on egg for two months
- male doesn't eat
- egg hatches
- male must care for baby

## 4. **NUMBER** the ideas as they will appear in the paragraph or essay.

Penguins' birth

- 3 — male takes care of egg
- 1 — female lays egg
- 2 — female leaves
- female spends winter at sea
- ~~the water is very cold~~
- ~~female leaves, male cares for baby~~
- 4 — male puts egg on his feet under belly
- male stays on egg for two months
- 5 — male doesn't eat
- egg hatches
- 6 — male must care for baby

5. **WRITE** the paragraph.

Penguins' birth

The female penguin lays the egg. she leaves the egg and spends the winter at sea. The male takes care of the egg He puts the egg on his feet under his belly and stays on it for two months. The male penguin doesn't eat. The egg hatches and the Male must take care of the baby.

6. **EDIT** Revise and proofread your answer.

Penguins' birth

**The birth process of penguins is fascinating and quite different from other mammals.** The female penguin lays the egg. **However, the female penguin leaves soon after laying the egg** and spends the winter at sea. **Meanwhile,** the male takes care of the egg. He puts the egg on his feet under his belly and stays on it for two months. The male penguin doesn't eat for the **entire time. Even after the baby penguin hatches, the male penguin continues to take care of the infant penguin.**

TRANSITION WORDS: however, meanwhile, even after

7. **FINAL DRAFT** Write the final draft in your neatest handwriting. Remember to indent!

The birth process of penguins is fascinating and quite different from other mammals. The female penguin lays the egg. However, the female penguin leaves soon after laying the egg and spends the winter at sea. Meanwhile, the male takes care of the egg. He puts the egg on his feet under his belly and stays on it for two months. The male penguin doesn't eat for the entire time. Even after the baby penguin hatches, the male penguin continues to take care of the infant penguin.