



What Was it About?

5th Grade Language & Literacy

Common Core Standard ELD.PI.5.10b.Ex—Write increasingly concise summaries of texts and experiences using complete sentences and key words (e.g., from notes or graphic organizers).

Most of us like to read, watch movies, and/or listen to stories. Often, we end up having to tell our friends, family, and acquaintances what a story was about, but that can be much easier said than done! **Summaries** are brief descriptions of stories or **events**. They usually need to be explained **chronologically**, or in the order in which the events happened. They are also more effective when they don't take a long time to deliver. In this exercise, we will practice describing our favorite stories and movies with multiple summaries that get shorter and shorter every time, until we use only one word to describe it! An example is provided at the end. Notice how unclear the **plot** becomes when we are limited in words.

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencil

Developmental Objectives/Domains: By completing this activity, you will

- 1.) Develop processing and descriptive skills
- 2.) Understand how to efficiently convey a message
- 3.) Enhance your storytelling skills

Procedure:

1. Think of your favorite book or movie.

2. Remember and write down ten key **events** that occurred throughout it. Be selective with this! Sometimes unimportant things seem important, but you can only choose ten. Choose the most important ones.
3. In complete sentences, write a ten-sentence summary of what happened. Remember to tell the events chronologically.
4. Once you've completed the ten-sentence summary, choose five of the most important events from that summary, and write a five-sentence summary.
5. Now take two of the most important events from the five-sentence summary and write a two-sentence summary.
6. Choose the most important event from those two events and write a one-sentence summary.
7. Think of a noun that sums up the key **theme** or moral of the story and use that noun as your single word summary.

Example:

Ten-sentence summary:

Disney's *The Lion King* is about a young lion named Simba, who is the crown prince of an African Savanna. His father Mufasa is training Simba to become king of the pride lands. However, we learn that Mufasa's brother Scar is jealous of Mufasa and Simba's right to the throne. He plots with a large pack of hyenas to overthrow Mufasa and scare Simba away. Scar stages an accident that leads to Mufasa's demise, while making Simba feel responsible for the passing of his father. He tells Simba he should run for his life instead of take responsibility for the accident which Simba thinks he caused, though he didn't. Simba runs away as advised, and meets a warthog named Pumbaa and a meerkat named Timon. Pumbaa and Timon have been living as social outcasts for a long time, and they teach Simba their ways until he is an adult. Soon after, Nala, Simba's childhood friend, finds him and tells him his uncle Scar has been a horrible leader and they need Simba to return. At first Simba is afraid of facing what he thinks he did so many years ago and needs much convincing, but after a vision of his father, he returns to Pride Rock with Nala and overthrows Scar's reign.

Five-sentence summary:

Disney's *The Lion King* is about a young lion named Simba, who is the crown prince of an African Savanna. His father, the king, is killed in an incident which his uncle Scar convinces him he caused, though Scar actually staged it. Scar convinces Simba to run away because Simba's pride of lions will hold him responsible for his father's death. Simba does and lives a life of "no worries" with his friends Timon and Pumbaa, a meerkat and warthog pair, until

eventually, Simba's childhood friend Nala finds Simba. She pleads that Simba help the pride suffering under Scar's rule, and take responsibility for the throne which was rightfully bestowed upon him, which he does after much convincing.

Two-sentence summary:

Disney's The Lion King is about a young lion named Simba, who is the crown prince of an African Savanna. When his father dies in an accident staged by his uncle, Simba is made to feel responsible for his father's death and must overcome his fear of taking responsibility as the rightful heir to the throne.

One-sentence summary:

Disney's The Lion King is about a young lion prince named Simba who, after losing his father in a staged accident which he feels he caused, must face his fear of responsibility and take his rightful place on the throne.

One-word summary:

Responsibility