

## Student Discussion Worksheet

### Directions:

The word “summarize” might make you think of a class assignment, but you also do a lot of summarizing in your daily lives. You summarize when you tell a friend about a movie you saw last weekend, or when you tell a family member about your day. In this activity, you will explore what makes a good summary and practice your summarizing skills on an article from *Science News*.

### Discuss

Form pairs or small groups and begin to think about how you summarize by discussing the following prompts:

1. When do you summarize or interact with summaries from others? Be sure to consider examples outside of class assignments.
2. For each of the scenarios you described above, what is the goal of the summary? How does the goal affect the information included in the summary?
3. For each of the scenarios described above, who is the summary for? How does the information included in a summary depend on the audience?
4. How might your goal or audience affect the length of your summary and the language you choose to use?
5. When you’ve encountered complex information in the past (in a story, presentation or conversation), what techniques have helped you turn that info into a summary?

### Read and take notes

Your group should choose one of the *Science News*’ Top 10 articles of the year to read and summarize. Once you’ve made the selection, you will read and summarize the article on your own. Before reading, review the key points to look for below and answer any questions provided by your teacher.

#### Key points to look for

As you read an article, identify the following:

- The main point and any details that support the main point
- A secondary idea and any supporting details
- The who, what, where when, how and why of the article
- Important events and the timeline of those events
- Problems and their resolutions
- Any caveats or counterpoints to the main or secondary ideas
- Any questions that come up along the way or remain unanswered at the end

### **Brainstorm and outline**

After reading, consider the following prompts before writing your summary on your own.

1. What is the goal of your summary?
2. Who is your audience?
3. Given your goal and audience, how long should your summary be?
4. What was the main point of the article? That should be the start of your summary.
5. Given the length you've chosen, what information can you include and what must you leave out? Refer back to your notes to identify the most important information to include.

### **Write and review**

Write your summary and then review the summary using the prompts that follow. You may choose to revise your summary.

1. Have I been brief?
2. Have I restated the essential information without repeating the exact words and phrases used in the original article — or, have I “used my own words”?
3. Have I missed any key points that I identified under the “Read and take notes” header that should be included?
4. What specific facts have I used from the original article? Have I incorporated those facts correctly?
5. Have I attributed information where necessary?

### **Share and reflect**

Now take turns reading your summaries aloud in your small group. After sharing your summaries, discuss the following prompts.

1. How were the summaries similar? Was there information that every group member thought was essential?
2. How were they different? What did some group members choose to leave out that others included? Why?

3. Could your summary be improved? What would you change about your summary after hearing other summaries?

4. How might you write your summary differently if you had chosen a different audience and/or goal?