

What You Need To Know About Writing the OSSLT Summary Writing

Key Points:

1. Answering the summary question on the OSSLT is a lot like making a note from a textbook or article in class.
2. The word **“selection”** is used throughout the OSSLT to indicate all of the articles, stories, graphical texts and other items you read during the test. When you’re asked to summarize or find the main idea from “the selection” on the test, you’re being asked about the thing you just read.

In previous years the OSSLT Summarize Question has been written in one of two ways.

“State the main idea of this selection and provide one specific detail from the selection that supports it.” (2011 OSSTL)

OR

“Summarize the selection. Include a main idea and one detail that supports it.” (2010 OSSLT)

There’s one question of this type on the test each year worth 30 points.

3. The summary question and the other 5 short answer questions all ask for the same length of answer: six lines, 3-4 sentences. Your answer should fill the space provided.
4. Be specific. Lack of details is usually the difference between a score of 20/30 and 30/30 (see the rubric)

OSSLT Summary Rubric

Score	Criteria
10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response indicates minimal reading comprehension • Response provides minimal or irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection <p>The response provides only a <u>main idea</u> from the selection OR only one or more <u>details</u> from the selection without identifying the main idea OR provides a <u>main idea</u> with one or more <u>irrelevant ideas</u>.</p>
20/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response indicates some reading comprehension • Response provides vague ideas and information from the reading selection; it may include irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection <p>The response provides a <u>correct main idea</u> from the selection with one or more <u>vague details</u> OR a <u>vague main idea</u> and one or more <u>specific or vague details</u> from the selection.</p>
30/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response indicates considerable reading comprehension • Response provides accurate, specific and relevant ideas and information from the reading selection; it may

	<p>include irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection.</p> <p>The response provides a <u>correct main idea</u> and one or more <u>specific and relevant details</u> from the selection to support it.</p>
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OSSLT Summary Writing

The article you will be summarizing will be quite short – only a couple of paragraphs long. You identify a main idea and one specific detail that’s connected to the main idea in your answer.

Strategy:

Memorize these two questions and use them to determine the main idea.

1. Why was the selection originally written?
2. For what audience was the selection originally written?

Example: Selection from 2011 OSSLT Practice Test

For professional hockey teams in North America, the Stanley Cup is the top championship trophy. It has been a tradition to award rings to Stanley Cup winners for over a century. In 1893, each of the seven players on the Montreal AAAs received a plain gold ring engraved with crossed hockey sticks after they won the first Stanley Cup. Today, championship rings are much more elaborate. Some are appraised for as much as \$30 000. When the Tampa Bay Lightning won the Stanley Cup in the 2003–2004 season, the team ordered gold rings featuring 138 diamonds apiece—including a cluster of rare blue diamonds making up the trophy on each ring. Stanley Cup rings also have great sentimental value. Doug Gilmour lost his 1989 ring that he won while playing for the Calgary Flames. He offered a \$2000 reward for its return, but he never got it back. Some players, however, are willing to part with their rings for a price. Jean Beliveau of the Montreal Canadiens sold his ring collection, raising \$1 million for his widowed daughter and his two granddaughters’ education. Others have lost their rings to theft. Tim Horton’s 1967 ring was stolen in 1998 and later sold to a second-hand shop for \$500. It showed up at an auction valued at \$35 000, but was removed from bidding after it was found to have been stolen. Whether they are simple or fancy, or whether they are kept by their original owners or not, Stanley Cup rings are prized symbols of hockey victory.

Questions you ask yourself when planning your summary:

1. Why was the selection originally written?

The selection was probably written to explain the history of Stanley Cup rings and how valuable they are. It could have been a Wikipedia entry.

2. For what audience was the article originally written?

This article was written for people who are interested in hockey and hockey souvenirs.

After thinking about these two questions you’re ready to write your summary:

OSSLT Prompt: **State the main idea of this selection and provide one specific detail from the selection that supports it**

The main idea of the article is that Stanley Cup rings have a long history and are very valuable. This is demonstrated by the fact that

Jean Beliveau of the Montreal Canadians was able to sell his ring collection for a million dollars. It's obvious that fans of hockey and hockey souvenirs are really interested in Stanley Cup rings.

OSSLT Summary Practice

Note Taking

The best way to practice writing summaries for the OSSLT is to practice taking notes.

Step 1:

Select a few paragraphs from your textbook or from an article you're reading. The paragraphs should be about 250 words long. That's the length of the text you'll be asked to summarize on the OSSLT.

Step 2:

Read the selection. While you're reading think about these two questions (memorize these questions)

1. Why was the selection originally written?
2. For what audience was the selection originally written?

Step 3:

After you've finished reading and thinking about the two questions, you're ready to write your summary. These three sentence prompts might be helpful:

The main idea of this selection is that ...

An important detail connected to this idea is...

People who want to know more about _____ would find this selection really useful.

Short Answer Summary Rubric

Typical Questions: **“Summarize the selection. Include a main idea and one detail that supports it.”**

“State the main idea of this selection and provide one specific detail from the selection that supports it.”

Score	Criteria
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response indicates minimal reading comprehension• Response provides minimal or irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection <p>The response provides only a <u>main idea</u> from the selection OR only one or more <u>details</u> from the selection without identifying the main idea OR provides a <u>main idea</u> with one or more <u>irrelevant ideas</u>.</p>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response indicates some reading comprehension• Response provides vague ideas and information from the reading selection; it may include irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection <p>The response provides a <u>correct main idea</u> from the selection with one or more <u>vague details</u> OR a <u>vague main idea</u> and one or more <u>specific or vague details</u> from the selection.</p>
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response indicates considerable reading comprehension• Response provides accurate, specific and relevant ideas and information from the reading selection; it may include irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection. <p>The response provides a <u>correct main idea</u> and one or more <u>specific and relevant details</u> from the selection to support it.</p>