

Restating and Summarizing

Summarizing and restating ideas are tools that you can use to help you remember more when you read and learn faster. They're a way to use and process the information you read. If you don't do something with the information you've just read, your mind tosses it out. It can't be that important, right? By restating or summarizing information, you fix it in your mind, and you make sure that it makes sense to you. Here's a review of restating and summarizing:

! **Restating** means that you say something again in your own words. This is good to help you understand and remember something that's pretty short. You might restate a sentence or a paragraph that you read.

! **Summarizing** means that you give the most important information about what you read. It's similar to writing down the main ideas of what you read. You might write a paragraph saying what the main points of a whole article are. This is good for big readings and to help you figure out what the main ideas are.

The difference between restating and summarizing is that in restating, you don't leave anything out. You just say it again in your own words. In summarizing, you only give the most important points, in your own words.

Some questions on the GED will ask you to identify a main idea, or summarize the material. Other questions will ask you to recognize a restated idea. Let's take a look at both.

Finding the Main Idea

One of the things the GED test asks you to do is find the main idea of something you're reading. But here's a hint... it doesn't necessarily say, "What's the main idea?" You have to look at the question and realize that they want you to figure out the main idea of what you read. To understand the main idea of a GED reading, you need to think about what it's trying to say overall. What's the most important thing? What's the big picture?

Here's an example of a GED question that asks about main idea... but instead of asking for a main idea (or a summary), it asks you what would be a good title:

What would be the best title for this section?

- 1) The Most Options in a Recorder
- 2) Customized Recorders at Low Prices
- 3) Initial Recorder Setup
- 4) How to Hook Up Your Recorder
- 5) Exiting the Initial Setup Screen

Well, in what way is a title the same as a main idea? A title gives an overview of what you're going to read. It picks out the most important idea or topic. So, the title is like the main idea.

Now, the passage might be up to 400 words. But you want to get the main idea quickly. Here's a hint... the first and last paragraphs are usually the most important and can give you a main idea. You can even try just reading the first and last sentences of the paragraphs, and skimming through them. Here's an example:

WHAT TYPE OF PRODUCT IS BEING DESCRIBED?

The first time you turn on your Recorder, the setup screen will appear. The setup screen is designed to allow you to program your Recorder to your personal needs quickly and easily. By following the instructions on the screen, you'll be able to select options including preferred TV channels,

- (5) languages, screen settings, and subtitles or closed captioning.

The first screen that appears is the main setup screen. Choose the "Channel Settings" option first, and it will lead you through the necessary channel setting options. The Recorder can automatically detect channels being received, and you may also set up channels manually. If channels are not

- (10) being detected, please see the troubleshooting section at the end of this book.

Continue with "Screen Settings." You will be able to choose default settings for your television screen. These settings will be applied to all channels, but you will have the option later of changing the settings for

- (15) individual channels.

In the "Language Settings" section, you will be able to select settings for closed captioning and subtitles as well as language options for various channels. The "Sound Settings" area gives you access to main volume controls, and the "Date and Time" settings allows you to set the current

- (20) date and time as well as your time zone and daylight savings time settings.

Your initial setup will provide you the full range of Recorder benefits, including the ability to set up to 10 shows to record in advance. Once you've completed all the setup screens, you will see the "Exit" option appear. Select "Exit" to end the initial setup and begin using your

- (25) Recorder.

You will not be able to turn off the Recorder until you finish the initial setup and confirm that your settings are correct. Otherwise, the Recorder does not have all the necessary information to function properly. If you must quit the initial setup screen without completing the setup, you must

- (30) disconnect the power cord from the outlet. Your settings will not be saved, and the main setup screen will appear when the Recorder starts again. You must complete the main setup screen before you can begin to use your Recorder.

This example is fairly long, and might take a bit to read through the whole thing. If you just read the first and last paragraphs, paying special attention to the beginning and end sentences, you'll get the main idea:

The first time you turn on your Recorder, the setup screen will appear. The setup screen is designed to allow you to program your Recorder to your personal needs quickly and easily. By following the instructions on the screen, you'll be able to select options including preferred TV channels, languages, screen settings, and subtitles or closed captioning.

...

You will not be able to turn off the Recorder until you finish the initial setup and confirm that your settings are correct. Otherwise, the Recorder does not have all the necessary information to function properly. If you must quit the initial setup screen without completing the setup, you must disconnect the power cord from the outlet. Your settings will not be saved, and the main setup screen will appear when the Recorder starts again. You must complete the main setup screen before you can begin to use your Recorder.

That's a lot less information to process, but you can use it to choose a correct answer. Answer 1 says "The Most Options in a Recorder." The sentences talk about a Recorder, but they don't talk about options.

Answer 2 says “Customized Recorders at Low Prices.” Well, settings have to do with customizing, but the sentences here don’t mention prices at all.

Answer 3 says “Initial Recorder Setup.” Both the first and last paragraphs talk about the Recorder setup and the setup screen. So, this looks like a pretty good answer.

Answer 4 says “How to Hook Up Your Recorder.” There’s nothing in these sentences focusing on hooking up the Recorder, just about completing the setup screen. So that’s probably not the best answer.

Answer 5 says “Exiting the Initial Setup Screen.” Well, the end does talk about exiting the screen, but it doesn’t seem to be the main idea. The beginning doesn’t talk about exiting the initial screen at all.

So the best answer is 3, “Initial Recorder Setup.” You can figure it out by focusing on a few key places in the text. If you’re unsure, read more completely to check your answer, but remember that a main idea is something that applies to the whole text, not just to one part of it.

Recognizing a Restated Idea

Many questions on the GED ask you to identify restated ideas. These are comprehension questions, to make sure that you understand what you’ve read. If you can recognize the same idea phrased differently, then you’ve understood the reading. You’ll find these questions on the social studies and science tests as well as on the GED reading tests. Here’s an example:

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IN AN EMERGENCY AT WORK?

Emergency Policies

A. Emergency Warning Notifications

- If an emergency or disaster in the community occurs, you may receive a warning from radio or television, government organizations
- (5) such as NOAA, Internet web sites, the local or state police, or even friends or family members. In case of an emergency in the building, you may be warned by the smoke detectors, sprinkler system, an emergency siren, building security, or building management. In case
- (10) of a suspected emergency, monitor several sources of information to gather as much relevant information as possible.

- If you receive notification of a possible disaster or emergency situation, immediately notify your superior. If the situation requires urgent action, such as a fire, sound alarms and notify employees as quickly, calmly, and succinctly as possible. As necessary, take action
- (15) to avoid further damage without risking harm to yourself or others.

B. Sprinkler System, Smoke Detector, and Fire Alarm

- In the event of a fire, the activation of the sprinkler system and/or smoke detector due to smoke and/or heat will automatically activate the fire alarm. The building management, company management,
- (20) and fire department will all be notified by the alarm company. Pull-type manual alarms are located on every floor, as are fire extinguishers and fire evacuation plans. Do not use elevators in the event of a fire.

C. Emergency Sirens

- The building is equipped with emergency sirens that sound in the case of severe weather alerts and other situations that may require emergency action. Please use television, radio, or Internet to gather information if the siren sounds.
- (25)

D. Emergency Aid

First aid kits and emergency water and food are stored on each floor of the building.

The fire alarm can be turned on by:

- 1) Smoke turning on the smoke detector
- 2) Notifying the alarm company
- 3) The activation of heat or smoke
- 4) Automatically activating the pull-type alarms
- 5) None of the above

The first step in finding the answer is locating the part of the reading that it's talking about. That's where skimming and scanning come in, and since the reading is broken up into sections, the section titles make it easy to navigate. The question is about fire alarms, so you can quickly identify that the answer is in section B, which is about fire alarms.

Now, you need to find the part that talks about how the fire alarms are turned on. There are two sentences that might be relevant:

In the event of a fire, the activation of the sprinkler system and/or smoke detector due to smoke and/or heat will automatically activate the fire alarm. The building management, company management, and fire department will all be notified by the alarm company. ***Pull-type manual alarms are located on every floor,*** as are fire extinguishers and fire evacuation plans. Do not use elevators in the event of a fire.

So, which of the answers, if any, restates information on how the fire alarm is turned on?

Answer 1 says the fire alarm is turned on by smoke turning on the smoke detector. That says the same thing as “the activation of...smoke detector due to smoke...will automatically activate the fire alarm.” To activate means to turn on, so if smoke turns on the smoke detector, that in turn turns on the fire alarm. So, it looks like the answer is 1. It’s the same idea, just in different words.

Let’s take a look at the other answers. Answer 2 says, “Notifying the alarm company.” That’s repeating some of the words in the text, “...will all be notified by the alarm company.” But it doesn’t have anything to do with turning on the alarm. Be careful about answers that repeat phrases from the text. You have to look at what the meaning is, not just the words.

Answer 3 says, “The activation of heat or smoke.” Again, the words “activation,” “heat,” and “smoke” are all in the text, but this isn’t a very good way to explain how the fire alarm is turned on. Heat or smoke will turn on the fire alarm, but only if they set off the smoke detectors or sprinkler system.

Answer 4 says, “Automatically activating the pull-type alarms.” Again, the answer gives words from the reading. But what does it really mean? The pull-type alarms are manual. That means you pull them yourself. So, why would they be “automatically” activated? That’s the opposite of manual. This is another answer that pulls words from the text but doesn’t give the real meaning.

Answer 5 is, “None of the above.” Since answer 1 does a pretty good job of restating the meaning of the text, answer 1 is the best answer. “None of the above” doesn’t apply.