

Academic Summary Skills

Terms & Conditions of Use

The Summary Process

- 1) Read text – know the text in great detail!
- 2) Locate / highlight important ideas
- 3) Try to identify main ideas from supporting ideas
- 4) Try not to use examples / supporting ideas
- 5) Make notes
- 6) Hide the text
- 7) Write your version [Need to write in your own words]
- 8) Check the text

Summary Skills Example

Writing a summary: **Japanese Rail Tunnel**

Due to an increase in traffic between the various island which make up Japan, and predictions of a continuing growth in train travel, a rail tunnel was built to connect the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. The Seikan Tunnel in Japan is today the longest tunnel in the world, with a length of almost 54km. When the tunnel was opened in 1988, all existing trains went through it. However, newer Japanese bullet trains have never used the tunnel because of the cost of extending the high speed line through it. Consequently, the train journey from Tokyo to Sapporo still takes about ten hours. In contrast, the journey by air takes only three and a half hours. This has combined with the fall in the cost of flying, has meant that more people travel by plane than train and the tunnel is not used as much as forecasters had predicted.

- *Increase in traffic*
- *connect Islands (Honshu & Hokkaido)*
- *Predictions and continuing growth*
- *The longest rail tunnel*
- *opened 1988*
- *54km*

- *Opened in 1988*
- *Bullet trains*
- *Never used tunnel*
- *Fall in the cost of flying*
- *Not used as much as forecasters predicted*

The Model Summary

The longest railway tunnel in the world links the islands of Honshu & Hokkaido. This 54km tunnel was inaugurated in 1988 to deal with the predicted increase in rail traffic. However, the fall in the cost of flying and the fact that high speed trains cannot use the tunnel have resulted in the tunnel being less widely used than expected.

A longer Summary

Writing a summary: **The Sydney Opera House**

The Sydney Opera House is one of the most famous architectural wonders of the modern world. Instantly recognisable both for its roof shells and its impressive location in Sydney harbour, it has become one of the best known images of Australia. Situated close to Sydney Harbour Bridge, this large performing arts centre was started in 1959 and completed in 1973. After a competition to choose the design, the Danish architect Jorn Utzon was chosen. The Opera House includes five theatres, five rehearsal studios, two main halls, four restaurants, six bars, and several shops. The construction of the Opera House was fairly controversial as the final cost of the building was much higher than predicted. It was expected to cost \$7 million, but in fact, the final cost was \$102 million. This was due to difficult weather conditions, problems with structural design, and changes to contract. The remarkable roof shells were also difficult to construct. Furthermore, the construction took longer than planned. Completion of the building was initially expected in four years, in 1963. Unfortunately, because of the many problems and changes which were necessary in the design, the building was not completed until ten years later, in 1973. It was inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth 2 on 20th October 1973, and millions of people attended the ceremony. The event was televised, and included a fireworks display and classical music performance.

- Most famous architectural wonders of the modern world
- Recognisable both for its roof shells
- Location in Sydney harbour
- Performing arts centre
- Started in 1959 and completed in 1973
- Competition: the Danish architect Jorn Utzon
- Five theatres, five rehearsal studios, two main halls, four restaurants, six bars, and several shops.
- Controversial: expected \$7 million / the final cost \$102
- Difficult weather conditions, problems with structural design, and changes to contract.
- Inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth 2 on 20th October 1973

The Model Summary

The Sydney Opera House The Sydney Opera house, has been described as 'one of the wonders of the modern world', is located in Sydney Harbour, Australia. Designed by Danish Architect, Jorn Utzo, this large performing art centre with numerous theatres, restaurants and other facilities, took fourteen years to build at a cost of over \$100 million. The construction was seen as controversial as it was estimated to only cost \$7 million but adverse weather, design difficulties and contractual problems made expenses spiral out of control. It was inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II in 1973 at a ceremony televised to the world.

Adapted from Philpot, S & Curnick, L. 2011. Headway Academic Skills, Level 3. OUP