About the Genre: Summary

What is it?
A summary is a piece of writing that explains another piece of writing in different words. A summary is usually shorter than what it is summarizing. This is because it focuses only on the main idea and the key supporting points. For example, a summary of a story includes a short explanation of the important characters and events. It does not include every event and character in the story. Summaries use simpler words than the original text. This helps the reader understand it. Summaries are found in many different kinds of writing such as essays, articles, stories, and even reports or test answers.

What is the purpose?
Summaries make complicated ideas or pieces of writing clearer. A summary helps a reader to understand an idea because it presents only the important ideas. Based on a summary, a reader can also learn if he or she wants to read the full piece of writing.

What is the structure?
A summary should begin with a clear statement of the main idea or ideas. A summary is typically shorter than the original piece of writing and includes only the most important examples or details. The author must be careful not to change the meaning of any ideas. At the same time, the author must not copy sentences from the original text. Summaries are written in simple language in different words from the original. To do this, a writer often uses synonyms, words that mean the same thing as another word.

Comprehension Questions
1. How does a summary help a reader? **Choose two.**
   a. A summary helps a reader decide if he or she wants to invest in a new business.
   b. The reader can learn if he or she wants to read the original, longer piece of writing.
   c. A summary helps a reader understand the original piece of writing because it is shorter and simpler.

2. Why does a summary writer often use synonyms?
   a. in order to not copy any of the original sentences
   b. to give details not included in the original writing
   c. to state the summary writers own views

3. A summary does **NOT** include which of the following items?
   a. simple language
   b. detailed descriptions
   c. different words than the original