

Summary and main idea worksheet 1

Directions: Read each passage and complete the five points below.

1. Create a title for the passage related to the main idea.
2. Accurately summarise the text.
3. Your summary must describe all key ideas from the text.
4. Do **not** include opinions or personal info in your summary.
5. Highlight or underline key ideas in each passage.



Picture this: a herd of elephants flies past you at sixty miles per hour, followed by a streak of tigers, a pride of lions, and a bunch of clowns. What do you see? It must be a circus train! One of the first uses of the circus train is credited to W.C. Coup. He partnered with P.T. Barnum in 1871 to expand the reach of their newly combined shows using locomotives. Before circus trains, these operators had to lug around all of their animals, performers, and equipment with a team of more than 600 horses. Since there were no highways, these voyages were rough and took a long time. Circuses would stop at many small towns between the large venues. Performing at many of these small towns was not very profitable. Because of these limitations, circuses could not grow as large as the imaginations of the operators. After they began using circus trains, Barnum and Coup only brought their show to large cities. These performances were much more profitable and the profits went toward creating an even bigger and better circus. Multiple rings were added and the show went on. Today, Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus still rely on the circus train to transport their astounding show, but now they use two.

1. Main idea related title for the passage:

2. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

How do you say “Holy cow” in French? The fastest thing in France may just be the fastest ground transportation in the world. The TGV (*Train à Grande Vitesse*: French for very high speed) is France’s national high speed rail service. On April 3rd, 2007, a TGV test train set a record for the fastest wheeled train, reaching 357.2 miles per hour. In mid 2011, TGV trains operated at the highest speed in passenger train service in the world, regularly reaching 200 miles per hour. But what you may find most shocking is that TGV trains run on electric power not petrol. Now if you’ll excuse me; I have a record to catch.

3. Main idea related title for the passage:

4. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

Giddy-up, cowboys and girls! In the Southwest during early half of the 1800s, cows were only worth 2 or 3 dollars a piece. They roamed wild, grazed off of the open range, and were abundant. Midway through the century though, railroads were built and the nation was connected. People could suddenly ship cows in freight trains to the Northeast, where the Yankees had a growing taste for beef. Out of the blue, the same cows that were once worth a couple of bucks were now worth between twenty and forty dollars each, if you could get them to the train station. It became pretty lucrative to wrangle up a drove of cattle and herd them to the nearest train town, but it was at least as dangerous as it was profitable. Cowboys were threatened at every turn. They faced cattle rustlers, stampedes and extreme weather, but kept pushing those steers to the train station. By the turn of the century, barbed wire killed the open range and some may say the cowboy too, but it was the train that birthed him.

5. Main idea related title for the passage:

6. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

Electric trolley cars or trams were once the chief mode of public transportation in the United States. Though they required tracks and electric cables to run, these trolley cars were clean and comfortable. In 1922, auto manufacturer General Motors created a special unit to replace electric trolleys with cars, trucks, and buses. Over the next decade, this group successfully lobbied for laws and regulations that made operating trams more difficult and less profitable. In 1936 General Motors created several front companies for the purpose of purchasing and dismantling the trolley car system. They received substantial investments from Firestone Tire, Standard Oil of California, Phillips Petroleum, and other parties invested in the automotive industry. Some people suspect that these parties wanted to replace trolley cars with buses to make public transportation less desirable, which would then increase automobile sales. The decline of the tram system in North America could be attributed to many things—labor strikes, the Great Depression, regulations that were unfavorable to operators—but perhaps the primary cause was having a group of powerful men from rival sectors of the auto industry working together to ensure its destruction. Fill it up, please.

7. Main idea related title for the passage:

8. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

Summary and main idea worksheet 2

Directions: Read each passage and complete the five points below.

1. Create a title for the passage related to the main idea.
2. Accurately summarise the text.
3. Your summary must describe all key ideas from the text.
4. Do **not** include opinions or personal info in your summary.
5. Highlight or underline key ideas in each passage.



What's dressed in all black, practices stealth, and is a master of espionage, sabotage, and assassination? You guessed it: it's a ninja! Perhaps the only thing more elusive than a ninja is the source of the word *ninja*. In China ninja are more often referred to as shinobi. The Chinese word *shinobi*, short for *shinobi-no-mono*, means "to steal away." The word *shinobi* appears in Chinese poems as far back as the eighth century. So how did this word become *ninja*? Some believe that during the Edo period in Japan, the word *shinobi-no-mono* was appropriated and transformed to the very similar word *ninja*. This probably happened because it was a lot quicker and easier to just say *ninja*. It is difficult to see how such a transformation could have occurred when we look at the words using our alphabet, but if you look at the kanji representing these words, it may make more sense to you. This is how you write *shinobi-no-mono* in Chinese: 忍の者. And this is how you write *ninja*: 忍者. Now do you see the similarities?

1. Main idea related title for the passage:

2. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

Ninjas used many different tools and weapons to get the job done: throwing stars, bows, acid-sputting tubes to name a few, but the favorite weapon of most ninjas was probably the katana. The katana is a long, curved sword with a single blade and a long grip to accommodate two hands. This sword was often carried in a sheath or scabbard on the ninja's back. Though the sword was primarily used for fighting and killing, the scabbard served a number of purposes too. The ninja could remove the sword, angle the scabbard against a wall, and use it to climb to a higher place. Or, while stealthily negotiating their way through a dark place (such as an enemy's residence at night), ninjas may have used the scabbard as a walking stick, feeling or probing their way around objects so as not to knock into anything and alert the enemy. Perhaps the ninja's most sinister use of the scabbard was to put a mixture of red pepper, dirt, and iron shavings at the top of the scabbard, so that when the ninja drew his sword, his opponent would be blinded. I wonder what a ninja could have done with a Swiss Army knife.

3. Main idea related title for the passage:

4. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

Invisibility, flight, the power to split into multiple bodies... these superhuman abilities have long been associated with ninjas, but ninjas didn't really do all of that stuff. They were just regular people with exceptional abilities. So why do people think that ninjas had super powers? Well, one reason is that ninjas were very secretive and left behind few historical records of their activities. Since we do not know much about what they actually did, we are left to speculate. Another reason why people often think that ninjas had superhuman abilities is because of how ninjas are depicted in folklore (particularly during the Edo period in Japan). In such legends and works of art, ninjas were mysticized and romanticized. These romantic notions of ninjas as superhero are perpetuated in media today, but maybe that's just because these days people expect ninjas to have supernatural abilities. Ki-yah!

5. Main idea related title for the passage:

6. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

The image of the ninja wearing all black is a popular one indeed, but there is really no evidence that ninjas ever wore such a costume. In fact, it is much more likely that ninjas dressed as regular civilians, which would have been far more effective camouflage in most situations than an all black suit. The use of disguises amongst ninja is common and well-documented. Ninja often dressed as monks, entertainers, fortune-tellers, merchants, or farmers. Each of these disguises carried advantages that dressing in all black did not. Dressed as monks, ninjas could conceal weapons in their robes. Dressed as entertainers, they could spy in enemy buildings without arousing suspicion. Dressed as fortune-tellers, they could extract information from unknowing targets. Dressed as merchants, they could travel freely across enemy borders. And while dressed as farmers, ninja carried simple gardening tools (such as sickles or trowels) and used them as deadly weaponry. In this way if a ninja were caught by authorities, he could claim that his deadly apparatus were tools, not weapons. Though they may not have been wearing all black stealth suits, ninjas were always well-disguised.

7. Main idea related title for the passage:

8. Summarise the passage in your own words: _____

Summarising Test

Directions: Read each passage. **Highlight or underline necessary information.** Write your summary.

1. If you are reading this right now, you are taking part in the wonder of literacy. Because of printed words, people can send information across both time and space. Ideas are put in writing and sent to readers across thousands of miles and years. Because of writing, the words of distant people can influence events, offer knowledge, and change the world. Much of the credit for the development of this phenomenon can be attributed to one man.

2. Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg, better known as Johannes Gutenberg, was born in the German city of Mainz. Though most of Gutenberg's early life is a mystery, historians believe that he studied at the University of Erfurt in 1418 and spent much of his young adult life practicing the profession of his father: goldsmithing. Gutenberg borrowed money from investors in 1439 and found himself in financial trouble.

3. In the year 1439 the city in which Gutenberg lived was planning to exhibit its large collection from Emperor Charlemagne (a famous ruler who had united much of Western Europe around 800 AD). The exhibit was expected to bring many visitors to the town, so Gutenberg took investments and created polished metal mirrors which were to be sold to the visitors (it was a common belief at that time that mirrors were able to capture holy light from religious relics). The mirrors which Gutenberg produced probably would have sold well, but due to severe flooding the event was delayed by one year. The impatient investors demanded that Gutenberg return their investments, but he had already spent the money on producing the unsaleable mirrors. He was trapped in a difficult situation. Gutenberg decided to share his greatest secret with them.

4. This secret would forever change the world, all of history, and even the process of keeping history. It's been argued that Gutenberg's idea was one of the greatest of all mankind. This one idea would lead to the spread of countless others. It would play a key role in the development of the Renaissance, Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment, and the Scientific Revolution. This idea would bring learning to the masses. Gutenberg had created the mechanical printing press with movable type.

5. Before the spread of Gutenberg's idea, literature was handwritten. That means that each copy of the bible and all of its 73 books were tediously hand scribed, and this was done before the invention of the ballpoint pen. Given the amount of detail that went into each text, creating a single copy of a bible could take years. Because of the effort that went into producing them, books were extremely rare and valuable. Because of the value of books, there was little reason for common people to learn to read or write since it was unlikely that they would ever handle a book in their lifetimes. Gutenberg's invention would change that. His printing press allowed literature to be produced on a mass scale. His movable metal type could be arranged once to form a page, and he could print the page again and again.

6. The first major text that Gutenberg produced was a 42 line copy of the bible. Scholars estimate that Gutenberg produced between 165 and 185 of these bibles, which sold out almost immediately. Most copies went to churches and universities, though one was sold to a private individual. Copies are known to have sold for 30 florins (about three years of wages for a clerk at the time), which may seem expensive but was much cheaper than a hand produced copy. Purchasing a Gutenberg Bible in the 1450s would have been a good investment if you and your descendants were able to maintain it. Only twenty-one complete Gutenberg Bibles exist today and the last one traded hands in 1987 for 4.9 million dollars, the highest price ever paid for a book at the time.

7. Gutenberg's brilliant idea would soon change the world, but in the short term he bungled a large and risky investment. He found himself in financial trouble once again and was sued by one of his investors, who accused Gutenberg of mismanaging money meant for the production of books. The courts ruled against Gutenberg and he lost the shop that he had created. He was effectively bankrupt.

8. Though he had failed as a businessman, the technologies that he had created spread rapidly. As these printing technologies spread, news and books began to travel much faster than previously possible. The world has not been the same since. Though Gutenberg was financially unsuccessful in his own lifetime, he made the world a much richer place.

Directions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer. Refer to the text if necessary. Write your answers in your jotter, 1 – 9 number and letter only, e.g. 1. D. Questions 10 and 11 in full sentences.

1. Which of the following expresses the correct order of events? _____

- a) Gutenberg was born in Mainz, invested in mirrors, and then became a goldsmith.
- b) Gutenberg created the printing press, printed the bible, and then invented the metal mirror.
- c) Gutenberg went to college, revealed his press, and then invested in shiny mirrors.
- d) Gutenberg studied goldsmithing, invented the printing press, and then lost his shop.

2. Which *best* explains why Gutenberg's plan to sell mirrors failed? _____

- a) The mirrors were less popular than he had expected.
- b) Flooding delayed the event for an entire year.
- c) Too many other people had the same idea.
- d) Newly invented glass mirrors rendered his metal mirrors obsolete.

3. Which of the following did Gutenberg invent? _____

- a) Reflective mirrors.
- b) The printing press with movable type.
- c) Written language .
- d) Scientific inquiry.

4. Which is not listed in the text as a movement to which Gutenberg's idea contributed?

- a) The Great Schism. _____
- b) The Scientific Revolution.
- c) The Renaissance.
- d) The Age of Enlightenment.

5. Which of the following is *best* supported by evidence from the text? _____

- a) Gutenberg's idea was a tremendous success that made him incredibly wealthy.
- b) Gutenberg's idea didn't catch on in his lifetime, but grew very popular after his death.
- c) Gutenberg's idea did not make him rich but spread very quickly.
- d) Gutenberg's idea did not catch on right away but made him incredibly rich over time.

6. Which *best* explains why most people were illiterate during Gutenberg's time? _____

- a) Books were rare and very expensive.
- b) The public school system had not yet been created.
- c) Writing had not yet been invented.
- d) Emperor Charlemagne made reading and writing illegal for common people.

7. Which *best* expresses the main idea of this text? _____

- a) To describe what life was like during the Middle Ages.
- b) To persuade people to read and write more.
- c) To chart the spread of printing technologies across Europe.
- d) To provide biographical information about Johannes Gutenberg.

8. Which *best* explains why so few of Gutenberg's bibles were sold to private individuals? _____

- a) Gutenberg wanted to use his talents to help churches and universities.
- b) Gutenberg's Bible was pretty expensive and most people couldn't read.
- c) Most Europeans were not religious and did not care about the bible.
- d) Gutenberg's investors forbade him from selling the bibles to private individuals.

9. Which of the following titles best expresses the main idea of this text? _____

- a) *Investing Wisely: Turning Your Good Ideas into Money.*
- b) *How to Make Books Using the Gutenberg Method.*
- c) *The City of Mainz: Life in Medieval Germany.*
- d) *Gutenberg: A Man Who Changed the World.*

10. Why was Gutenberg's invention important? Use information from the text to support your response. Make your point, quote text, explain the quote and connect it.

11. Was Gutenberg successful? Use information from the text to support your response. Make your point, quote text, explain the quote and connect it.
