SUMMARY Writing SKILLS

SELECTIVE SUMMARY – Q. 3 IN THE EXTENDED ENGLISH LANGUAGE IGCSE EXAM

Question 3 of the Extended IGCSE exam asks you to write a SELECTIVE SUMMARY using information from two passages. You are asked to summarise the points made about one or two specific topics. No other information is relevant. You will lose marks if you include points that are not directly relevant to the topic you have been asked to write about.

E.g. A past IGCSE question asked for a summary of “Hippy John’s lifestyle”. Only information given about his lifestyle is relevant, any other information about him or other characters given in the passage is irrelevant. The history of hippies or hobos in America is irrelevant - writing about these things wastes time and marks.

The mark scheme will list all the relevant points you should have made, for which you will be given one mark each up to 15 (but be aware that if there are many more than 15 relevant points you might have to make 20+ points to achieve 15/15 for content)

A Step by Step Guide to Summary Writing for the Extended IGCSE Exam

Step 1: Read the question and underline the key words

Ask yourself: What information is it I am being asked to select for this summary?

E.g. “Write a summary of the ways in which modern, international city life is taking over in Beirut and Bangkok and of the signs of the past that remain.” You are being asked to select 2 types of information: 1) ways in which modern, international city life is taking over 2) signs of the past that remain

Step 2: Make a brief note of what you have to select at the top of each passage.

Note briefly the key words relating to the information you’ve been asked to select at the top of the 2 passages, e.g. “mod. int. life taking over” and “signs of past remaining”. This will help you to keep focused on selecting relevant ideas only as you reread.

Step 3: Reread the passages and start selecting relevant points underlining them using 2 different coloured pens (for 2 types of information)

Use 2 different coloured pens, one for each type of information, eg red for points relating to “mod. int. life taking over” and green for “signs of past remaining”. As you reread the passages underline relevant points using the 2 colours.
The relevance of some points will be more obvious than the relevance of others – you will need to read very carefully and think very carefully in order to judge relevance. CONCENTRATE – you can’t skim read and then write an effective summary.

**Step 4: Evaluate and count the points you have identified by underlining**

Reread carefully the information you’ve underlined to check it is relevant to the specific demands of the question, glance at the key words you’ve noted at the top of the passages. If it is not relevant put a cross through the information so you remember not to use it when you write.

Count all the points that you think are relevant. There should be around 20 different points in the two passages. If you have much fewer than 20 different points REREAD the passages searching for additional relevant points to select and underline.

**Step 5: Write the summary, organizing your ideas into paragraphs as you write and thinking about THE RULES for summary writing – see box at end of document.**

Use the 2 types of information selected to help you structure your response, eg

Paragraph 1: ways in which modern, international city life is taking over in Beirut (passage1)  
Paragraph 2: signs of the past that remain in Beirut (passage1)  
Paragraph 3: ways in which modern, international city life is taking over in Bangkok (passage2)  
Paragraph 4: signs of the past that remain in Bangkok (passage2)

**NOTE: DO NOT WRITE AN INTRODUCTION OR CONCLUSION IN A SUMMARY - A SUMMARY SHOULD BE CONCISE.**

As you write put a tick next to each selected, underlined point in the passages so you can check you haven’t left anything out and have covered EVERYTHING RELEVANT – approximately 20 different points.

**Step 6: Read over your summary, asking yourself – will this get 15/15 for content and 5/5 for summary style and quality of language?**

To achieve 15/15 for content you should have approximately 20 RELEVANT points in your summary. If you have much fewer than this go back and scrutinize the passages looking for other relevant points to add.

To achieve 5/5 for summary style and quality of language you need to have made all points clearly and concisely in your own words. The answer must be strongly focused on the passages and on the question. Correct spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes and cross out any
words or phrases that unnecessarily repeat points already made. Consider the examiner's marking criteria, provided by the IGCSE exam board, in the table below:

Marks for Summary Style and Quality of writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Marks</td>
<td>All points are made clearly and <strong>concisely</strong> in the candidate’s own words. The answer is strongly focused on the passages and on the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Marks</td>
<td>Most of the answer is <strong>concise</strong> and well focused even if there is an inappropriate introduction. Own words are used consistently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Marks</td>
<td>There are some examples of <strong>concision</strong>. There may be occasional loss of focus. Own words are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Marks</td>
<td>The answer is mostly focused but there may be examples of comment, repetition or unnecessarily long explanation. There may be occasional <strong>lifting</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Marks</td>
<td>The answer frequently loses focus and is wordy. There may be frequent <strong>lifting</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 Marks</td>
<td>Over-reliance on <strong>lifting</strong>; insufficient focus to be placed in Band 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Concise** means brief. Remember a summary is a shortened version a text containing the key points in as few words as necessary. Write in a concise, succinct style.

**Lifting** means copying word for word or quoting. Remember you must use YOUR OWN WORDS

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The Rules for Writing an IGCSE SUMMARY (back)

Do
- Use a concise, formal, impersonal style
- Use key words from the question, e.g. “... is a sign of the past remaining”
- Remember to cover approximately 20 different points
- Consider the word limit given on the exam paper. If you write a lot less, you haven’t included enough information, if you write a lot more, you must have included irrelevant information, repeated points or given your opinion

Don’t
- Don’t include an introduction or conclusion
- Don’t copy the wording from the passages – the information needs to be the same, but the wording needs to be different - Use your own words throughout.
- Don’t write using “I” or “you”
- Don’t use informal language or slang
- Don’t add to descriptions using unnecessary adjectives or adverbs.
- Don’t repeat any information – even if a point was made twice in the given passage you should only make it once.
- Your Opinion is not wanted in a summary - don’t give it!