

# 11 Summarizing

A.1.5.1 A.2.5.1

When you **summarize** something, you restate what the story is about in your own words. A summary is not very long. It contains the main idea and the most important supporting details. Leave out less important details. For example, a summary of *Little Red Riding Hood* might be: “A girl visits her sick grandmother. She is attacked by a wolf pretending to be her grandmother. Luckily, she is saved by a woodsman.”

Do not restate *all* the details. That is called **paraphrasing**. A paraphrase is longer than a summary. For instance, in a paraphrase you would include the detail that the wolf had big teeth. But you wouldn’t use this detail in a summary.

**Assemble** Summarizing is a great way to check your understanding. If you can’t summarize it well, then you don’t understand it.

## Example

Summarize the passage “A Born Astronomer.” Use details from the passage to support your answer.

### Gallant’s Answer:

“A Born Astronomer” is about a woman who discovered a comet and became famous.

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Gallant’s answer could be better. He included the main idea, but he didn’t include details that would support his answer. He should have picked important details that helped tell us why Maria Mitchell became famous.



### Improving Gallant’s Answer

The summary of this passage could include details about how her comet was the first one discovered that couldn’t be seen without a telescope. Other details might be that Maria taught science and mathematics to girls, that she was a librarian, and that she became a professor and was admired around the world.



**Connections** Think about what you did today. Which details would you put in if you wrote a summary of the day? Which details would you leave out?