



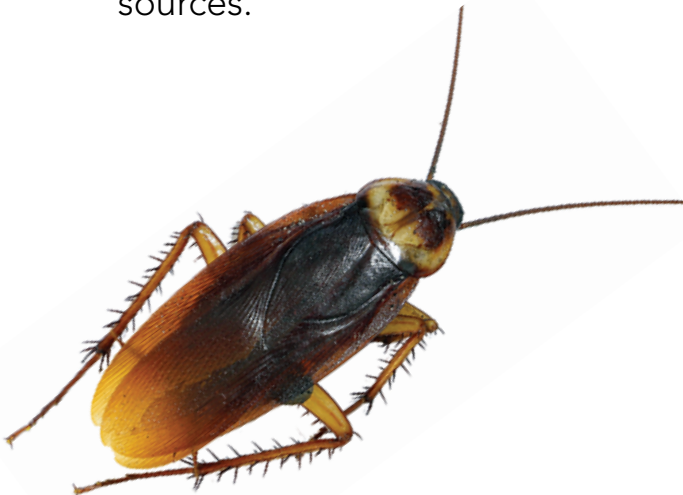
Definition

When you **summarize**, you tell the important points of what you have read. One way to summarize a paragraph is to select the topic **sentence**. It tells the **main idea** of the paragraph.

Read each paragraph. Find the first and last word of the sentence with the key idea.

The American Cockroach

- 1 The American cockroach is a well-known pest insect. It feeds on human and pet food. Its **secretions** can leave behind a bad smell.
- 2 Cockroaches also can cause illnesses. Disease-carrying bacteria attached to the cockroach can be left behind on food. Humans that eat the contaminated food can get food poisoning.
- 3 Pest control of cockroaches is difficult. Most **insecticides**, or poisons, are not very effective. The best way to get rid of cockroaches is to keep things clean and seal all food and water sources.



Cane Toads

- 4 A cane toad is a poisonous amphibian. Poison glands on the top of its head give out a toxic fluid that burns or blinds its victims. Its poison is powerful enough to kill cats, dogs, and even crocodiles. This poison is a cane toad's natural defense.
- 5 Twice a year, a female cane toad lays between 20,000 and 30,000 eggs. Cane toad eggs are toxic. Other amphibians or fish that eat cane toad eggs may die.



Rabbits in Australia

- 6 In 1859, Thomas Austin brought 24 rabbits to his land in Australia to hunt. Just a few years later, over 14,000 rabbits were shot on his land! The rabbits had lots of food to eat and few predators. The rabbits bred and spread across the country.
- 7 By the 1940s, Australia was home to millions of rabbits. The large rabbit population posed a threat to native animals. Rabbits ate the vegetation, including the roots of grasses. Many native species could not find food or shelter and died.

8 The rabbit populations also created problems for the land. With very little vegetation and roots, nothing was left to hold the topsoil in place. Rain washed the topsoil away and wind blew the topsoil away. Crops could not grow without topsoil.

Tip

The **topic sentence** is often the first or last sentence of a paragraph. The topic sentence includes the key idea.

Mystery Plagues

9 In 430 B.C.E., a mystery plague struck the people of Athens, Greece. People started vomiting and bleeding. Their bodies felt like they were on fire. Some people even jumped into water wells to ease their fevers and thirst.

10 There were some very strange things about the mystery plague in Athens. Those people who survived the disease could not catch it again. However, some of the survivors became blind or lost their memories.

11 There was a total breakdown of law and order in Athens during the time of the plague. Because people felt that they would die soon, they did whatever they wanted. They spent all their money on eating, drinking, and partying.

12 The Ebola virus, first reported in Africa in 1976, has a high death rate. Its symptoms include high fevers, rashes, bleeding, and great pain. Some scientists think the Ebola virus is related to the mystery plague in ancient Greece.



A	B	C	D	E	F
Cane...toxic.	There...plague.	Cockroaches... illnesses.	The...country.	There...Athens.	The...animals.
In...Greece.	Pest...difficult.	The...land.	Some... Greece.	A...amphibian.	The...insect.
G	H	I	J	K	L

Objective: Identify key ideas and key details in informational text (description); research to find more information on a topic.

