Shrink It Down: Summarising Across Paragraphs

Teacher		**Class**	Year 5
Subject	English	**Topic**	Summarising main ideas
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United Kingdom

Pupils learn to find the thread across paragraphs and group details. They shrink a text about hedgehogs onto one paper strip.

Curriculum links

- summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas [2]

Learning objectives

- Students will summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph.
- Students will identify key details that support the main ideas across paragraphs.

Success criteria

- I can find the thread that links ideas across paragraphs.
- I can group small details into one bigger idea.
- I can write a 1-2 sentence summary in my own words.

What students already know

Show Slide 4 photo prompt. Ask: what is one sentence this whole picture is mostly about? Listen for a bird's-eye view, not one tiny detail.

Key words

summarise	to make a text much shorter, keeping only the most important points [3]
main idea	what the whole piece of writing is mostly about, the thread every sentence serves [3]
key detail	an important fact or example that shows the point is true [2]
paragraph	a group of sentences about one part of a longer text

Materials

- Slides 1-12, including Slide 6 video and Slide 8 video
- Printed copies of Worksheet Passage Hedgehogs in Trouble page 2, paragraphs 2-3
- Paper strips, highlighters, glue sticks
- Mini whiteboards and pens

Before the lesson

- Print Worksheet Passage Hedgehogs in Trouble paragraphs 2-3 for each pair, plus paper strips and glue sticks
- Test Slide 6 Video clip 1 (0:00-4:38) and Slide 8 Video clip 3 (0:00-2:42) with sound
- Set out highlighters in two colours and mini whiteboards for voting and drafting

Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

To hook pupils with shrinking and recall the difference between a main idea and details.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 title, then Slide 4: Hedgehogs face problems, but people are starting to help.
2. Hold up a full page and one narrow paper strip and say the hook: what would you save and what would you drop?
3. Show Slide 5 mystery of a tiny doorway cut in a garden fence and take 3 ideas on who it is for.
4. Confirm it is a hedgehog highway - a hole that lets hedgehogs move and find food.

STUDENTS DO

1. Look at the photo and mystery doorway and suggest who the hole is for and why.
2. Tell a partner one thing they would keep and one loud detail they would drop.

Say: I have got a whole page but only one strip of paper to keep it on. What would you save and what would you drop? Today we will summarise two paragraphs by keeping the main idea and folding details together.

Ask: What is the difference between a main idea and a detail? (Main idea is what the whole text keeps talking about; details are examples that prove it [3].) · Why would a tiny fence hole matter to hedgehogs? (It lets them move between gardens to find food and mates.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can say keep the spine, drop the examples. If unsure, repeat: summarising keeps the main points and drops the details [3].

Support: Talk partner gives sentence starter: I would keep ___ because it is about the whole text. **Stretch:** Explain which detail best proves the hedgehog problem and why.

Use: Slides 1, 4-5

5–17 min **Teaching** 12 min · Whole class

To model finding the thread across paragraphs and grouping details into one idea.

YOU DO

1. Show Slides 2-3 objectives and key words, then Slide 6 video.
2. Play Video clip 1 (0:00-4:38) and ask pupils to listen for the thread across paragraphs.
3. Model with Paragraph 2 on the board, underlining roads, fences and pellets as one group.
4. Show Slide 7 and model reading the first sentence of each paragraph to find each point quickly, because a topic sentence is often the first sentence in a paragraph [4].

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch, skim the two paragraphs and highlight repeated words about hedgehogs and trouble.
2. Call out which details belong to the bigger idea of human obstacles.

Say: A summary is controlled shrinking. We keep the spine and drop the examples. We look for the repeated thread that every sentence serves, then group small details into one big idea [3].

Worked example: Paragraph 2: Roads cut across the paths they use at night. Tall closed fences block the gaps they need to walk through. Some slug pellets poison the small creatures they eat. Step 1: thread = trouble for hedgehogs. Step 2: group roads, fences, pellets into human obstacles. Paragraph 3: Help is now growing. Gardeners leave small gaps under fences called hedgehog highways. Step 3: turn = but help is growing. Model summary: Hedgehog numbers are falling because of human obstacles, but help is growing [3].

Ask: What thread links every sentence in Paragraph 2? (Trouble caused by human obstacles: roads, fences, pellets.) · How do Paragraphs 2 and 3 link for a summary across paragraphs? (Paragraph 2 = falling numbers from obstacles, Paragraph 3 = turn to growing help.)

Check understanding: Mini whiteboards: write spine or detail for slug pellets. All should show detail. Reteach if they write spine.

Support: Give a copy where key words are already highlighted to show what the whole text keeps returning to [3]. **Stretch:** Name which key detail best supports each part of the model summary.

Use: Slides 2-3, 6-7, Video clip 1 (0:00-4:38)

17–27 min **Guided practice** 10 min · Pairs

To practise skimming, scanning and folding details before independent writing.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 8 video prompt and play Video clip 3 (0:00-2:42).
2. Display Slide 9 P1 and P2 lines and Slide 10 Shrink-It Steps.
3. Guide skimming for general feel and scanning for key words to find specific information [4].
4. Cold-call pairs to group small details into one big idea in their own words.

STUDENTS DO

1. Skim P1 and P2, read first sentences fully, then scan for dates, numbers and capital letters that mark facts [5].
2. Agree with partner the thread and say a one-sentence shrink aloud.

Say: First skim each paragraph and read the first sentence. Ask what thread links every paragraph. Group small details into one big idea, then write one to two sentences in your own words.

Worked example: P1 thread: numbers falling. Details roads, fences, pellets all fold into human obstacles. P2 thread: help growing. Details fence holes and highways fold into people sharing space. Joint thread: falling because of obstacles, but help growing.

Ask: A detail like slug pellets appears once. Is that the main idea? (No, it is too narrow; the main idea is what every sentence serves [3].) · How do we keep a summary precise without copying? (Sum up what happened in a few words, in own words, not repeating whole story [5].)

Check understanding: Pairs hold up one finger for P1 thread and two for P2 turn. Listen for obstacles then help; remodel Slide 10 steps if mixed.

Support: Provide the two topic sentences already underlined so pupils discuss only how they link [4]. **Stretch:** Discuss what to do when the first sentence is not the main point and find the thread elsewhere.

Use: Slide 8, Video clip 3 (0:00-2:42), Slides 9-10

27–50 min **Main activity** 23 min · Pairs

To summarise two paragraphs on one paper strip by keeping the spine and folding details.

YOU DO

1. Give out printed Hedgehogs in Trouble paragraphs 2-3, paper strips, highlighters and glue sticks.
2. Instruct: underline the repeated thread, cut out loud details by crossing them through, keep the spine.
3. Circulate, prompting pairs to group examples into human obstacles and growing help.
4. Stop at 18 minutes for 3 pairs to glue and read their one-sentence join of both paragraphs.

STUDENTS DO

1. Read paragraphs 2-3, highlight the thread and group roads, fences and pellets under obstacles and gaps, grass-cutting and warnings under help.
2. Write and glue one 1-2 sentence summary in own words on the strip, then add which detail proves each part.

Say: Read both paragraphs. Underline the thread every sentence serves. Group the examples into one bigger idea. Glue one sentence that joins both paragraphs: what it is mostly about plus any change or turn.

Worked example: Cross through Roads cut across the paths they use at night as example, keep human obstacles. Cross through Gardeners leave small gaps under fences called hedgehog highways as example, keep help is growing. Final strip: Hedgehog numbers are falling because people blocked their paths, but gardeners and councils are starting to help.

Ask: Which key details support your first half about falling numbers? (Roads cut paths, fences block gaps, pellets poison food - all human obstacles.) · Which key details support your second half about help? (Fence gaps called hedgehog highways, councils cut grass less and warn drivers.)

Check understanding: Read strips: check each joins both paragraphs and is not too narrow or too broad [3]. If copying, ask them to say it again without looking.

Support: Give a text where key words are already highlighted to show what the whole text keeps returning to [3]. **Stretch:** Pupils add which key detail best supports each part of their summary.

Use: Slides 9-10

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

To check summaries against success criteria and name next steps.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 11 vote: which part helped most - finding thread, grouping details, writing in own words.
2. Take votes and ask two pupils to explain their choice in one sentence with proof.
3. Show Slide 12 exit ticket and give 4 minutes to write two lines in books.
4. Collect and link back to objectives on Slide 2.

STUDENTS DO

1. Vote, explain choice and compare strips for just-right length.
2. Complete exit ticket lines about one main idea and one supporting detail.

Say: A summary is a bird's-eye view. If your sentence only mentions slug pellets, you are still on the ground [3]. Check your strip covers both paragraphs and is in your own words.

Ask: How do you know a summary is just right? (It covers both paragraphs, groups details, not too narrow with one detail nor too broad and vague [3].) · Why use your own words? (To show understanding and be precise without repeating the whole story [5].)

Check understanding: Read exit tickets for thread + supporting detail. If many miss the link, display Shrink-It Steps again tomorrow.

Support: Give a word bank of five thread words to build the exit sentence around. **Stretch:** Write a second postcard summary from a different angle using same key details.

Use: Slides 11-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Copying whole sentences or writing everything instead of shrinking.	Summary is 3+ sentences long with exact phrases from the text.	Cover the text and retell in 1-2 own-word sentences; check it sums up in a few words, not the whole story [5].
Choosing the loudest detail as the main idea, e.g. only slug pellets.	Summary mentions one example and misses the second paragraph turn.	Ask what every sentence serves; fold roads, fences and pellets into human obstacles and add but help is growing [3].
Writing a vague theme that is too broad, e.g. about animals.	Summary could fit any text and has no key details.	Add the thread + turn + one grouped detail, using topic sentences to locate each paragraph point [4].

Support

- Give texts where thread words are already highlighted and topic sentences underlined
- Provide word bank and sentence frame: falling because ___, but help is growing when ___
- Allow skimming first sentences fully before scanning for details [4]

Stretch

- Add which key detail best supports each part of the summary
- Rewrite a too-narrow option to include the second paragraph turn
- Summarise a second two-paragraph text without writing until the final sentence

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target pairs in main activity; prompt underlining of thread words, help group detail cards into obstacles vs help, scribe strip if needed.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
What is the main idea linking paragraphs 2 and 3 of Hedgehogs in Trouble?	Hedgehog numbers are falling because of human obstacles, but help is growing.
Name one key detail that supports the falling-numbers part.	Roads cut paths / fences block gaps / pellets poison food.
Name one key detail that supports the help-is-growing part.	Gardeners leave hedgehog highways / councils cut grass less and warn drivers.

Sources

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