



SUMMARY STREET® FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[What is Summary Street®?](#)

[How does Summary Street work?](#)

[What is the KAT™ engine?](#)

[Does Summary Street use keywords in its evaluation?](#)

[What research has been conducted on Summary Street?](#)

[What are the benefits of using Summary Street?](#)

[Are there different versions of Summary Street?](#)

[How many reading passages are available? What topics or subject areas are covered?](#)

[For what grade levels is Summary Street appropriate?](#)

[How long does it take to score a summary?](#)

[What feedback do students receive?](#)

[Does the length of a summary affect its score?](#)

[Are students required to type their summaries directly into Summary Street?](#)

[What are the technical requirements for using Summary Street?](#)

Q: What is Summary Street®?

A: Summary Street is a reading comprehension and writing instruction tool. Students summarize reading passages in their own words and Summary Street automatically compares the student's writing to the reading passage. Summary Street compares the student's writing to each of the sections of the text and provides immediate feedback about the content coverage of the summary on a section-by-section basis. Additional feedback includes information on copying from the text, spelling, redundancy, and irrelevant sentences.

Q: How does Summary Street work?

A: Summary Street uses the Knowledge Analysis Technologies™ (KAT) engine, a patented technology based on over twenty years of research and development. It assesses the total content of a summary as well as the correlation between the summary content and that of the original reading passage. Summary Street compares the student's entire summary to each section of the assigned reading and returns feedback indicating how well the information in each section has been covered by the student's summary.

Q: What is the KAT™ engine?

A: The KAT engine evaluates the meaning of text by examining whole passages. The KAT engine is based on Pearson's unique implementation of Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA), an approach that infers semantic similarity of words and passages by analyzing large bodies of relevant text. LSA can then understand the meaning of text in much the same way as a human reader.

Q: Does Summary Street use keywords in its evaluation?

A: A common misconception is that Summary Street scores by recognizing keywords. It does not. If two or more different terms accurately describe a concept, Summary Street will recognize either or both and score them equally as well. For example, Summary Street measures

“Understanding is very important when you read something you want to know about”

as very similar in meaning to

“Comprehending’s essential”

even though there are no literal words in common. Keyword based similarity would find nothing in common between these two sentences.

Q: What research has been conducted on Summary Street?

A: Summary Street has been demonstrated to significantly improve student writing skills. The summaries of students who used Summary Street have been judged to be significantly superior in blind scoring by teachers than those of students who used a standard word processing program. Students who used Summary Street also received higher reading and writing scores on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) test.

For more information, please see the white paper [Building Student Summarization, Writing and Reading Comprehension Skills With Guided Practice and Automated Feedback](#) available on the Research page at www.summarystreet.com.

Q: What are the benefits of using Summary Street?

A: **Summary Street gives students the opportunity to practice their writing.** The only way to learn to write is to practice with informative feedback. The same goes for reading; the two are inseparable. Learn to read and you learn to write, learn to write and you learn to read. Summary Street provides the opportunity for students to practice both of these valuable skills.

Summary Street is time efficient allowing teachers to assign many more reading and summarizing assignments to students without additional grading time. However, successful use requires an initial investment. Students need time to read, identify the main ideas, plan their writing and perhaps execute a draft before entering it into Summary Street. Additionally, you may need to schedule access to the computer room or reserve a laptop cart for your classroom, if available.

Summary Street helps you focus your teaching. By observing students and using the Teacher Reports you can discover both individual and class strengths and weaknesses to help guide teaching.

Summary Street is flexible and easy to use. Teacher tools allow teachers to adjust the class roster, make assignments, set scoring thresholds, and manage and evaluate student progress easily.

Summary Street tutors students to improve subject knowledge, as well as reading comprehension and writing skills by providing detailed feedback on content.

Summary Street allows students to tackle more difficult reading assignments by boosting their understanding and performance through automated evaluation and feedback.

Q: Are there different versions of Summary Street?

A1: Yes, we have developed a custom version of Summary Street that aligns with California Prentice Hall Science textbooks for grades 6 through 8 and a version that aligns with Scott Foresman Science textbooks grades 4 through 6.

Q: How many reading passages are available? What topics or subject areas are covered?

A: Currently, we have over 100 reading passages available as part of Summary Street. These reading passages cover subject areas ranging from language arts to history to science and social studies. In addition, Summary Street contains selected reading passages from Prentice Hall's Science Explorer and World Studies textbooks. All reading passages include Lexile measures.

Q: For what grade levels is Summary Street appropriate?

A: Summary Street includes readings that are appropriate for students in grades 5-12.

Q: How long does it take to score a summary?

A: Most summaries are scored within a few seconds. Keep in mind that a slow or busy Internet connection may delay the response.

Q: What feedback do students receive?

A: Students receive feedback on their coverage of each section of the reading. Students also receive feedback on spelling, copying from the text, and irrelevant and redundant sentences, as well as on the length of their summary. Feedback is displayed in a graphical report that motivates students to continue to improve their summaries.

A sample student report is available at www.summarystreet.com.

Q: Does the length of a summary affect its score?

A: A summary will not be considered passing if it is either longer than the maximum word count set by a teacher or if the summary is too short.

Q: Are students required to type their summaries directly into Summary Street?

A: Students may type their summaries directly into Summary Street if they choose; however, many students choose to compose their summaries in a word-processing program and then copy and paste them into the Summary Street interface.

Q: What are the technical requirements for using Summary Street?

A: **Minimum System Requirements:**

Windows

- Windows 2000, XP
- 128 MB RAM (minimum), 512 MB RAM (recommended)
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher, Netscape Navigator 7.0 or higher
- Javascript enabled

Macintosh

- MAC OS 9.2 (minimum), Latest version of OS X (recommended)
- 128 MB RAM (minimum), 512 MB RAM (recommended)
- Safari 1.3.2 or higher, Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.1 or higher*, Netscape Navigator 7.0 or higher
- Javascript enabled

Monitor Resolution

- 800 x 600 (minimum), 1024 x 768 (recommended)

*Internet Explorer support on the Macintosh in student interface only.