Summarizing Information

Learning the Skill

One good way to remember information is to summarize it in your own words. When you summarize, you note only the most important points and details that are closely related to these points. A summary should be more condensed than the original material, leaving out unnecessary information. A geographer, for example, may study data on how the physical geography of a place has changed during the past 100 years. The data may include thousands of facts. The geographer summarizes the facts into several statements that are easy to understand.

Follow these steps to summarize information:

• Take notes or make an outline as you read.
• Focus on one section or paragraph at a time.
• Write down the most important points.
• Write down only closely related details.
• Using your own words, summarize the main points and details.
• Read your summary aloud. Does it make sense? Have you left out anything important?

✔ Practicing the Skill

Directions: Read the information below, and then answer the questions that follow.

Russia’s Deadly Pollution

Sixty percent of Russians live in an environment that is harmful to their health, according to an official report published in 2006. The underlying study, which was carried out by experts working for Russian President Vladimir Putin, also expresses concern over the lack of access to safe drinking water, the decline of agricultural land, and poor facilities for dealing with waste. Russia’s environmental problems are well-known. But the study indicates they are getting worse with no sign of improvement or urgent action being taken by the country’s authorities.

The report paints a picture of the impact of Russia’s poor environment on human health. Environmental conditions, it states, contribute to the deaths of 300,000 Russians per year—far exceeding the number who die in road accidents. Nearly 65 million Russians live in areas where air pollution exceeds safe levels, leading, in turn, to a rapid growth in the number of chronic respiratory disorders. Drinking water is unsafe in half the country’s regions. In addition, the soil is increasingly infertile and forest fires are ever more common.

Source: news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2512697.stm.
Critical Thinking Skills Activity
continued

1. **Finding the Main Idea**  What is the main point in the information?

2. **Listing**  What are three important details in the passage?

3. **Summarizing**  Write a one-sentence summary of the information.

✔️ **Applying the Skill**

**Directions:**  Read the information below. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Kamchatka—The Land of Volcanoes**

The Kamchatka Peninsula, one of the most easterly parts of Russia, is an unforgettable land marked by contrasts—ice and fire, geyser-studded deserts and lush vegetation. From a geological standpoint, it is a young region. And it is young as far as tourism is concerned, too. During the Soviet period, the region was a military zone, strictly off-limits for foreigners and even for Soviet citizens who did not live there.

Only in recent times have the frontiers that isolated Kamchatka from the rest of the world been removed so that the mysterious peninsula could welcome its first visitors, revealing its many marvels—the 120 volcanoes, many of which are still active; the 200 geysers that constantly spout their jets of water; the majestic, cone-shaped, snow-clad mountains; the boundless glaciers; the immense forests; craters that have become enchanting lakes; rivers filled with salmon; and parks with wild animals.

The truly marvelous part of the peninsula is the Kronotskiy Wildlife Reserve, one of the largest of its kind in Russia (2.5 million sq. acres/1 million sq. hectares), that lies on the eastern coast of Kamchatka. It is dominated by the forbidding cone of the Kronotskaya Sopka volcano, which is covered with snow but often crowned with puffs of smoke. Here in late spring, skiing while being pulled by helicopters is common, and extremely interesting rock, ice, and snow routes have been opened.

**Source:**  [http://mountains.tos.ru/kamch.htm](http://mountains.tos.ru/kamch.htm)

1. **Finding the Main Idea**  What is the main idea of the information?

2. **Listing**  What are three important details in the passage?

3. **Summarizing**  Write a one-sentence summary of the information.