

# PTE Academic Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

## Lesson 13 – Summarize spoken text

**Time allocated:** 60 minutes


### Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This is a long-answer item type that integrates listening and writing skills, and requires test takers to understand, analyze and combine information from a spoken text, and then summarize the key points in writing.

*You will hear a short report. Write a summary for a fellow student who was not present. You should write 50-70 words.*

*You have 10 minutes to finish this task. Your response will be judged on the quality of your writing and on how well your response presents the key points presented in the report.*

Status: Beginning in 12 seconds.

Volume 

Cut

Copy

Paste

Total Word Count: 0

The instructions for this item type have been modified for this lesson to include a report. In the actual test, the instructions will generally refer to a lecture.

### Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

#### Strategy 1

Write down as much information as you can, and always note down any new terms, definitions, facts and statistics. Do not write names of speakers or people mentioned, but refer to their titles or jobs, e.g., psychologist, researcher, reporter, etc.

#### Strategy 2

Do not repeat all the information that you have noted down while listening. Shorten, simplify, paraphrase and synthesize the information into 50–70 words.

#### Strategy 3

Check and edit any grammatical and mechanical errors.

## Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

### Strategy 1

Remind your students that they will hear the spoken text only once so they should try to note down as much key information as possible. They can use the Erasable Noteboard Booklet that they are provided with at the test center, or simply type their notes on screen. It is also important to note down any terms, especially academic ones, definitions, factual and statistical information.

Students should also pay particular attention to words and phrases that indicate the structure of the spoken text (e.g., *features a series of studies, First, Then, Next, That brings us to, Let's consider, The problem is*), highlight importance (e.g., *most significantly/importantly, very specific, especially*), signal contrasting ideas (e.g., *But, However*) and give examples or supporting details (e.g., *For example/instance*).

Instead of writing down the names of the people mentioned, students should note their jobs or titles, e.g., *professor, lecturer, researcher, psychologist*, etc. It is also important to organize notes in the order of importance, e.g., main idea, supporting ideas, supporting example(s) and detail(s).

Explain that speakers may also return to some points or ideas they have mentioned. That is why it is important that students leave space around their notes in case they need to add new points closer to the relevant idea.

Remind students that they should not write in complete sentences, but use keywords or their own abbreviated forms, and omit unimportant details.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Play the audio [L13\_Summarize\_spoken\_text\_1] and have students take notes.
- Ask students to explain how they have organized their notes.

### Strategy 2

Explain to your students that they will have ten minutes to write their summaries. This may seem like a long time, but they should stay focused and keep an eye on the timer in the top, right-hand corner of the screen when they take the test. Students should use this time to carefully go through their notes and condense the information into 3–4 sentences, starting with a topic sentence to introduce the main idea or ideas followed by 2–3 sentences providing supporting points or examples. They do not have to include all the examples from the recording. They can shorten some or omit the less important details.

It is also important that students paraphrase the information using their own words or sentence structures. They can do this by changing word forms, using synonyms, changing grammar structures and word order.

When writing their summaries, students should synthesize the key information and indicate any contrasting ideas or conflicting points of view. Remind them of some transition words, adverbs or sentence patterns to indicate contrasts and opposites.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities in pairs:

- Have students carefully read through their notes and think about the following:
  - topic sentence to introduce the summary
  - the main idea(s)
  - some supporting details/points/examples
- Ask students to draft their summaries.
- Provide the model summary below and have students compare their summaries to it:  
**Model summary:** It is believed that touch can communicate a wide range of specific emotions. Touch has been ignored by researchers in the past, and has not been focused on until recently. A person describes an experiment carried out into touch and emotion to prove that touch can communicate a range of specific feelings.

### Strategy 3

Remind your students to give themselves a couple of minutes to check their summaries for grammatical errors (e.g., incomplete sentences, tense errors, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, singular and plural forms, word forms) and mechanical errors (e.g., misspelled words, wrong punctuation and capitalization).

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Display the three sample summaries for Item 1.
- Have students work in pairs to identify and correct any grammatical and mechanical errors.
- Explain that these are authentic responses from test takers. Have students analyze these responses and rank them from the weaker to the stronger. Then provide the explanations about the sample responses for Item 1.

## Step 4: Respond to a Summarize Spoken Text Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating the test conditions. They will have ten minutes to complete the task. Remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Play the audio for Item 2 [L13\_Summarize\_spoken\_text\_2], and have students write their summaries on a piece of paper.

## Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

Ask students to evaluate their summaries in pairs or groups. Display the model summary for Item 2 and have students compare their summaries to it.

Provide the three sample responses for Item 2 and ask students to rank them from the weaker to the stronger. Then provide the explanations about the sample responses for Item 2.

## Item 1: Transcript

*Scientists are discovering that when you touch someone, you communicate very specific emotions such as sympathy, disgust, gratitude, or even love. The current issue of the scientific journal Emotion features a series of studies about touch. Reporter Michelle Trudeau touched base with the lead researcher.*

**Michelle Trudeau:** *Psychologist Matt Hertenstein from DePaul University in Green Castle, Indiana decided to study touch while he was watching parents interacting with their babies - making faces and cooing sounds, squeezing, stroking, nuzzling them.*

**Mr. Matt Hertenstein** (DePaul University): *And all of a sudden it struck me one day and I thought, you know, I wonder if touch can communicate distinct emotions, much like the face and the voice.*

**Michelle Trudeau:** *Decades of research has been done on the face and the voice and the distinct emotions that they communicate. But touch has been relatively neglected by researchers until Hertenstein stepped in and began his experiments.*

**Mr. Matt Hertenstein:** *We invited two participants into the lab. And we put a curtain up between those two people.*

**Michelle Trudeau:** *So they couldn't see or hear each other. One participant, the sender, was told to try and communicate twelve different emotions, one-by one, to the other participant, the receiver.*

**Mr. Matt Hertenstein:** *The receiver would put his or her arm underneath the curtain, on to the sender's side.*

**Michelle Trudeau:** *The sender would then touch the receiver's forearm, trying to communicate the specific emotion, such as envy, fear, love, embarrassment, anger, gratitude, pride, disgust. The receiver had to then decide which emotion was being communicated.*

## Item 1: Sample Responses

1)

Scientists have researched that touch has more emotional signals to human's feeling, even stronger than hear and see, for we see or hear people, we may not feel much. Scientists have done an experiment involved in two participants, one can see and hear each other, while the other one can only touch the other one, they found that through touch people feel more about human's feeling, like envy, love.

2)

Research shows emperical evidence on the role of touch in communicating emotion like gratitute, love,,etc. It can be observed through parents making face, cuddling their children. One experiment was made with 2 participants, one the sender and the other the reciever of touch. The 2 are separated by a curtain and the sender is asked to touch the reciever to communicate 12 types of emotions like anger and disgusting,

3)

Touch has been neglected as an avenue of communicating distinct emotions, relative to studies involving facial and vocal communication. The journal Emotion featured studies involving touch. One researcher was motivated to study after seeing how parents and babies use physical contact in addition to facial and vocal expressions to communicate with one another. In one study, the sender was asked to communicate twelve distinct emotion, e.g. fear and love.

## Item 1: Explanations of Sample Responses

1)

### **B1 Response**

While the response contains relevant information, the test taker misrepresents the main point, leading the reader to believe the report is about an experiment which proved the importance of touch over sight and sound. This response demonstrates poor grammar control; verbs and nouns are not properly formed and several prepositions are missing. The vocabulary is basic and imprecise. The spelling is fine. This response is 69 words.

2)

### **B2 Response**

The main point has been discussed and supporting points are included. This response demonstrates weak grammar control, which hinders understanding. The vocabulary used is appropriate for the context. There are several spelling errors. This response is 69 words.

3)

### **C1 Response**

The response is an accurate and detailed summary of the main point and several supporting details discussed in the report. The grammar follows standard conventions. The vocabulary used is appropriate for the context. There is one spelling error. This response is 69 words.

## Item 2: Transcript

*About 20 years ago Kent Anger and Barry Johnson came up with 750 chemicals that could harm the brain during development. Nobody has since then dared to update that number, it's just a guess today, there has to be more than a thousand if there was 750 twenty years ago. But the problem is also that we have put too little emphasis on this type of, uh, research.*

*For example, it has taken so far the OECD 10 years to devise a battery of tests that they could recommend for systematic testing of chemicals for developmental neurotoxicity. That panel, that battery, has not yet been completed and authorised by OECD so it's taking way, way, way too long because it is complicated. But there is so much at stake.*

*Children are just losing IQ points and losing their concentration span, memory or motor functions. But in the present world where there's so much emphasis on knowledge and brain functions this can also translate into dollars. The EPA has calculated that every time a child loses one IQ point because of chemical pollution it costs society something like \$8,000 or \$10,000.*

## Item 2: Model Summary

About twenty years ago, it was estimated that there are 750 chemicals that can affect the developing human brain, and today there may be over 1000. There is little emphasis on the possible damage caused to developing children from these chemicals. It has taken the OECD ten years to develop an index to test for developmental neurotoxicity. Economically, each IQ point lost to chemical poisoning has an impact of \$8,000-\$10,000.



## Item 2: Sample Responses

1)

The lecture mentions chemical test for brain development. There are 2 level of chemical test. The first one is conducted by OECD on the systematic test chemical. They found that it takes a long time and too compicated for this test. The second is carried out by EPA which tried to find out some chemical solution.

2)

About 20 years ago, scientists came up with 750 chemicals that could harm the brain. It might be more than that nowadays. Research on the harmful chemicals is complicated and could take too long. Chemical pollution has various effects on children, for example loss of concentration span, memory and IQ points.

3)

20 years ago, the list of chemicals which affected brain development was numbered at 750. Today, this number has increased to about 1000. There is insufficient research on the testing of such chemicals by OECD. These chemicals cause harmful effects like the loss of IQ, concentration, memory and motor functions. It is estimated that for every lost IQ point of a child, society stands to lose 8,000 to 10,000 dollars.

## Item 2: Explanations of Sample Responses

1)

### **B1 Response**

While the response contains several keywords, it does not summarize the main issues described by the speaker. It demonstrates weak grammar control which hinders understanding. The vocabulary used is appropriate for the context. There is one spelling mistake. This response is 56 words.

2)

### **B2 Response**

While the response includes some main points, other key information from the passage is omitted. It demonstrates good control of grammar. The use of vocabulary is appropriate to the context. There are no spelling mistakes. This response is 51 words.

3)

### **C1 Response**

The response is an accurate and detailed summary of the main point and several supporting points discussed in the lecture. The grammar follows standard English conventions. The vocabulary used is appropriate for the context. There are no spelling mistakes. This response is 70 words.