

**UNDERSTANDING
READING
STRATEGIES**

► Summarizing

Talk About It

What are the advantages of feeling afraid?

PHOBIA FACTOR

Nonfiction Article by
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Summarizing



Identify the author's message. What does this title tell you about the main idea of this selection?

Summarizing



Identify the key idea and supporting details in this paragraph. In one sentence, how would you summarize this paragraph?

Fears and Phobias

Believe it or not, *fear* can help us succeed in the world. It all starts when we are babies. That is when we learn to fear—and avoid—situations that aren't safe. For example, we might cry if we're in a high place where we could fall. As we get older we continue to learn to fear dangerous situations and to avoid those situations that cause us danger. Fear is a natural reaction to danger. It protects us. Without fear, imagine the trouble we'd be in!

heat: thermophobia

spiders: arachnophobia

needles: belonophobia

shadows: sciophobia

Summarizing

Identify details that are important and ignore details that are not important. Decide what details in this paragraph are important.



Fortunately, for most of us, fear is just a small part of our lives. That is because our fears are based on *reasonable* dangers. If we are in a dangerous situation and feel afraid, our fear usually goes away when the danger ends.

Unfortunately, for some people, fears are extreme. About 5% of the population has a *phobia*—an extreme feeling of fear. A phobia is an *excessive* or unreasonable fear of an object, place, or situation. Unlike fears that help us *avoid* dangers (like high places or dangerous animals) these fears aren't usually based on real threats. Phobias are so strong that, instead of helping us the way most fears do, they hurt us by disrupting our daily lives.

Many Types of Phobias

There are many different kinds of phobias. The most common is called *social phobia*. People with social phobia have an intense fear of interacting with, or being in front of, other people. If faced with a situation that sparks this phobia, these people can become so stressed that they feel physically sick. Kids with social phobia are terrified of talking to a teacher or speaking in front of the class. Even walking across the room to the pencil sharpener might bring out their phobia.

Agoraphobia (pronounced uh-GORE-uh-FO-bee-uh) is another common phobia. People who suffer from agoraphobia have a fear of being in open or public places, especially if those places are crowded. This fear can be so intense that sometimes they refuse to leave their own homes. Imagine how hard life would be if we couldn't leave home!

school: scholionophobia

thinking: phronophobia

being dirty: autophobia

machinery: mechanophobia

colour: chromatophobia or chromophobia

Many people have specific phobias of certain objects or situations. Common examples include ophidiophobia (oh-FI-dee-oh-fo-bee-uh—fear of snakes), apiphobia (APE-uh-fo-bee-uh—fear of bees), acrophobia (AH-kro-fo-bee-uh—fear of heights), or aviophobia (AY-vee-oh-fo-bee-uh—fear of flying). You probably already know a lot of other specific phobias, but check out the list in the thorns on these pages! Most of these phobias develop when we're kids, but may go away in time. However, if these phobias last or get worse, expert help may be needed!

Symptoms of Phobias

People who suffer from phobias may have some of these symptoms:

- unrealistic worry about a situation or object that seems harmless to most people
- anxiety accompanied by a strong physical reaction, such as a racing heart, sweating, trembling, or nausea
- an overwhelming urge to flee the situation



Summarizing

Replace long lists with a single word or short phrase. What word or phrase can summarize this list of items?

pins: enetophobia

meat: carnophobia

strangers: xenophobia

mirrors: eisoptrophobia

Check out these famous people and their phobias.

Thomas Edison invented the lightbulb and was afraid of the dark (nyctophobia).

Madonna, famous and seemingly fearless singer, has a fear of thunder (brontophobia).

Aretha Franklin, singer, is afraid of flying (aviophobia).

David Beckham, soccer star, is afraid of disorder (ataxophobia).

Natalie Wood, an actor from the 1960s, was deathly afraid of water (aquaphobia). She died by drowning.

Rupert Grint, actor (*Harry Potter*), has a fear of spiders (arachnophobia).

Oprah Winfrey, talk-show host, is afraid of chewing gum (chiclephobia).

Anne Rice, horror writer, is afraid of the dark (nyctophobia).

Ray Bradbury, famous science fiction author, is afraid of flying (aviophobia).

Summarizing

In each section, identify the key idea and supporting details. How does the heading help you identify the important details in this section?

odours: osmophobia
or olfactophobia

Summarizing

Create a summary of the text using your own words. How can the headings in this selection help you organize a summary?

Summarizing

This selection uses descriptive text pattern. At right is a good graphic organizer for organizing summary notes for this text.

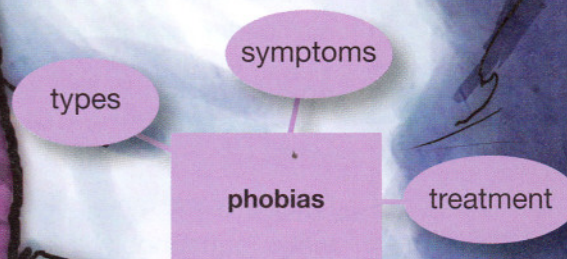


Treatment

One way to treat a person with phobias is with *exposure therapy*. With this method, patients are slowly exposed to their fears. They become increasingly comfortable with whatever they fear through gradual exposures. So, for example, someone who fears snakes might begin by reading about snakes. Once they're used to reading about snakes, they would move on to looking at photos of snakes, then looking at snakes in an aquarium, then touching a snake with gloves, and finally holding one with bare hands. With this treatment, patients work through increasingly difficult situations and learn that nothing bad happens. They learn to manage, and eventually overcome, their fear.

Virtual reality technology is a great tool during exposure therapy. Exposure to some fears, such as the fear of flying, could be expensive and time consuming. So therapists use virtual reality to give patients repeated exposure to flying without having them board an airplane!

The length of treatment depends on the person, but generally most people respond very well to treatment and go on to live normal, happy, and productive lives—fear-free at last!



Reflecting

Summarizing: What summarizing strategies did you use as you read this article? How did summarizing help you understand this article?

Metacognition: How does understanding your own fears affect your ability to understand the information in this article?