

1 Thousands of people work in Chicago’s government. You probably see the mayor on television, and you see other government workers in your community. If you see a police officer or a crossing guard, they are government workers. They are safety workers, and they are part of a system that helps everyone in the city. Thousands of people work every day to keep you safe, make sure you have water and other services.

2 There are other safety workers you don’t see, but they keep you safe. There are food inspectors. They go to restaurants, not to eat but to check for problems. They make sure the restaurant is clean so that customers won’t get sick. You may have seen a sign on a restaurant that it was closed by the health department. The inspectors have found serious problems. The restaurant will be inspected again before it is allowed to open. Sometimes a person gets sick because of food at a restaurant. That person usually takes a day to recover. Some people even have to go to the hospital after they get food poisoning.

3 There are many workers who help run the city’s systems. One of the systems you don’t see is mostly underground. It is the sewer system. That system carries the dirty water from homes and businesses. The water goes to a sewage treatment site. There it is cleaned. Workers have to make sure the sewers are working. They need to check for leaks. They may need to replace a part of the system. If you have ever seen a hole in the road and workers digging deep underground you know they’re fixing a sewer. When a sewer breaks it is urgent to fix it. If they don’t fix it right away, it could become a health problem.

4 There’s another system that involves water. It is the water system. People in Chicago have very clean water. The water you drink comes from the lake. About fifty years ago, it would come right from the lake and go into people’s homes. Pipes carried it to the homes. People might turn on the faucet and get water and a little fish. Yes, a fish could come into the home from the pipes. It would have traveled from the lake to the home. Pipes still carry water to the homes, but now it is filtered first. There is a very big filtration plant along the lakeshore. Water is pumped into the plant. Then it is cleaned. Then it is pumped to homes and businesses through the system of pipes under the city. There are hundreds of miles of pipes that carry the water.

5 So every day when you get water, cross a street, or go to a restaurant, you’re being helped by the government. The systems that the government runs help people stay safe and healthy. The thousands of people who work for the government all work for you.

1. What do you include in a summary of a nonfiction passage?

- a. everything
- b. what is important
- c. all the facts
- d. the title

3. Which of these is the best summary of paragraph 4?

- a. There are hundreds of miles of pipes.
- b. The water system brings clean water to people.
- c. The sawfly is a special insect.
- d. The sawfly lays eggs.

2. Which of these is the best summary of the first paragraph?

- a. The mayor runs the city.
- b. Everyone needs help.
- c. Government helps people.
- d. There are thousands of police.

4. Which of these is the best summary of paragraph 5?

- a. People need many things.
- b. Government services help everyone.
- c. Thousands of people work for the government.
- d. It is important to stay safe.

5. Write your own answer to this question. Write a short summary of the passage.

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	c	b	b

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. Answers should include that government helps everyone in many ways and include examples of important systems.

Skill: Summarize Nonfiction and Fiction

More Trees

5th Grade Fiction

Center for Urban Education ©2007

1 When my teacher asked me to write a letter to the mayor asking for a change, I thought long and hard about what I wanted to say. I considered the changes I would like to see in our community. The first thing that came to mind was that I wanted a playground. We used to have a playground, but the community got too crowded, so they built homes where the playground used to be. I would also like to have a library. We had a library once, but it burned down. People said it required too much money to rebuild it. What would the best change be?

2 My teacher said I need to choose just one thing I want, and write about that one thing. So after I thought about everything, I decided on one particular change I wished to see. I chose trees, because I want more trees in our neighborhood. If we have more trees, the city will be much cooler in summer. Trees will also make the city much more beautiful, too. During wintertime, we can hang lights on the trees, which will make the city much brighter. This was a change everyone would enjoy.

3 I wrote my idea to the mayor, and I also told my family about it. My mother told the block club the idea, and they all liked it. The members of the block club called a city office and requested trees to plant on our block. Although it took several weeks to get an answer, eventually the answer came. Our neighborhood received ten trees!

4 One Saturday, the people in the block club planted our new trees. To plant them, we needed large holes, and it was difficult work. City workers used big machines to dig them. Then, we had to water the trees. People took very great care of the trees.

5 The trees started out quite small, but over time they started to grow. Birds even came to nest in them, and now in the morning I can hear birds singing. I knew the trees would be pretty, but I didn't realize there would be more birds. What a difference I had made. The trees really changed our community.

6 I'm glad I wrote the letter, and I'm especially glad I told my mother my idea. I hope the mayor puts trees all over the city. We already have got them on my block, and they make the block a better place. One thing I learned is that a change starts with you.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.

6. What do you include in a summary of a story?

- a. what you liked about it
- b. all the things that happen
- c. all the characters
- d. the important events

7. What is the best summary of the first paragraph?

- a. The library burned.
- b. They wanted a new library.
- c. They wanted a library and a playground.
- d. They were writing to ask the mayor to make a change.

8. What is a good summary of paragraph 5?

- a. The trees grew.
- b. Birds nested in the trees.
- c. It is hard work to plant trees.
- d. The trees improved the neighborhood.

9. What is a good summary of the last paragraph?

- a. One person can make a difference.
- b. Having trees is a good idea.
- c. The mayor helped the neighbors.
- d. The block club helped a lot.

10. Write your own answer to this question. Write a short summary of the passage.

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	d	d	d	a

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. Answers should include that the student's idea led to a big change because the mother and neighbors got involved and that the neighborhood now has more trees.