

Summarising

involves writing a complete sentence, but getting down to the essence of a longer sentence



Read this article, then watch the video (next page) about summarising non fiction

Snow Slide!

Engineer Ed Adams studies snow crystals to understand—and even help prevent—dangerous avalanches

By Carli Entin | May 2011

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Ed Adams (left) and another researcher examine a crash dummy, the “victim” of an avalanche triggered for study. (MSU Photo by Kelly Gorham)

SuperScience

Ed Adams can control the weather—but no, he can't create a snow day for you. Adams is an engineer at Montana State University. He studies **avalanches**—the sliding of a large amount of snow and ice down the side of a mountain. An avalanche can be very dangerous, trapping anything in its path under heaps of snow. Through the use of a special lab that creates adjustable weather conditions, Adams hopes to learn how to predict when and where avalanches will occur.

Snowy Layers

The secret to understanding avalanches lies in the snow.

“Snow is just ice crystals,” Adams told *SuperScience*. These icy flakes form layers as they fall. The quality of these layers depends on weather conditions, such as humidity and wind. For example, snow crystals that fall on a windy day might not bond together very well on the ground. That can make for powdery snow—the type that's hard to make a snowball out of. This snow would form a weak layer.

Adams compares snow layers to the frosting between layers of a cake. If the frosting is stiff, the cake will likely stay together. But if the frosting is slippery, the top layer of the cake might slide off. That's what happens in an avalanche. A heavier, more sturdy layer of snow falls on top of a weak layer. As more weight is added, the weak layer is stressed. If that snow is disturbed—by a skier, a snowmobile, or even a passing moose—the weak layer can slide, along with the snow above it.

Exploding Science

In the university's cold lab, Adams investigates which conditions make a mountain's snow layers more likely to slide in an avalanche. Adams can adjust the weather in the lab to see what happens to snow when the environment changes. “I have a lab that controls the intensity of the sun. I can make a cloudy day or a sunny day,” says Adams.

Adams hopes that his work can shed light on predicting avalanches. Then people can be warned to stay away. In high-risk areas, snow slides can even be triggered on purpose using explosives. That way, the avalanche can be scheduled for a safe time when no one will be around to get trapped underneath.

Adams himself knows a little about starting avalanches. Before the research center was built, he and his crew would study avalanches by triggering explosives while they waited in a shack right in a snow slide's path. “It's not as dangerous as it sounds,” Adams claims. “But don't try it at home!”

Summarising

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- Retell in your own words.
- Include main idea and supporting details.
- Main idea and or topic should be stated in the first sentence of summary.
- Do not retell the entire passage.
- May tell what you learned from reading text or what additional information you want to still learn about.

Now summarise an article about rivers in your book. You only have 10 minutes including reading time.