

## PTE Academic Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies


### Lesson 6 – Summarize group discussion

**Time allocated:** 120 minutes


#### Step 1: Introduce the Question Type


This is a long-answer question type that integrates listening and speaking skills, and requires test takers to understand and summarize a group discussion.

*You will hear three people having a discussion. When you hear the beep, summarize the whole discussion. You will have 10 seconds to prepare and 2 minutes to give your response.*



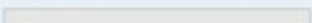
Status: Playing

Volume 



Recorded Answer

Current Status:  
Beginning in 147 seconds.



#### Step 2: Present the Question Type Strategies

##### Strategy 1

Listen for main ideas and supporting details.

##### Strategy 2

Develop and make use of effective note-taking.

##### Strategy 3

Provide an effective spoken summary of the main ideas and supporting details.

## Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

### Strategy 1

For test takers to be able to provide an effective summary, they need to develop strong listening skills for gist, specific information, such as names, places and dates, and for detail too. This will ensure they can discuss each speaker's contribution with specificity and speak for the full 2 minutes required. To support this, teachers should regularly incorporate targeted listening practice activities in the classroom, helping students improve these essential sub-skills through consistent practice.

In the test, test takers will listen to the audio once only. In class, to practice and develop listening sub-skills, you may want to play the same audio multiple times.

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

- Warm-up: Tell students they will hear three students discussing time management at university. Ask them to discuss these three questions in pairs or small groups:
  - Would you say you are good at managing your time? Why or why not?
  - What are the biggest challenges you face when trying to manage your time effectively?
  - What strategies do you use to stay organized and complete tasks on time?
- Listen for gist: Play the audio [L6\_Summarize\_group\_discussion\_1] and ask students to determine whether each speaker (Speaker 1, Speaker 2, and Speaker 3) finds time management easy or difficult. After listening, have them compare their answers with a partner before discussing as a class. **Answer: Difficult**
- Listen for detail: Play the audio [L6\_Summarize\_group\_discussion\_1] again and ask students to answer 3 multiple-choice questions:
  1. What does Speaker 1 identify as their biggest challenge since starting university?
    - a) Performing well academically
    - b) Balancing academic work, personal life, and extracurricular activities **Answer**
    - c) Finding enough extracurricular activities
    - d) Managing finances
  2. According to Speaker 2, what is their main time management issue?
    - a) Finishing assignments on time
    - b) Arriving late to lectures
    - c) Procrastination and rushing at the last minute **Answer**
    - d) Not leaving enough reading time
  3. Why does Speaker 3 find it difficult to plan ahead at university?
    - a) They prefer short-term planning
    - b) They dislike making plans
    - c) They have too many social commitments
    - d) They find it hard to multi-task **Answer**

Getting students to listen for specific information and differentiate between speakers can help them sharpen their ability to distinguish between voices, recognize various accents, and encourages them to explore relationships between different points of view.

### Strategy 2

The discussion is between 2 minutes and 30 seconds and 3 minutes long. Test takers are encouraged to use the erasable whiteboard provided at the test center for note-taking. Since note-taking is a skill in itself, they should develop their own effective style with guidance and practice, supported by their teacher.

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

- Play the audio [L6\_Summarize\_group\_discussion\_1] again and ask half the class to try Note-taking Approach 1 and the other half of the class Note-taking Approach 2. Give them either the Note-taking Approach 1 or the Note-taking Approach 2 Template below to make notes on or ask them to draw it on paper or create it on their computers. Remind students that they should not write in complete sentences, but use keywords or their

abbreviated forms, and omit unimportant details. Students will not have time to note down everything that they hear

- Students make notes as they listen
- Have students compare their notes with a partner and discuss any differences
- Ask them to try a different note-taking approach as they listen again. Give them either the Note-taking Approach 1 Template or the Note-taking Approach 2 Template below to make notes on or ask them to draw it on paper or create it on their computers
- Students make notes as they listen
- Have students compare their notes with a partner and discuss any differences
- Encourage students to reflect on which note-taking approach worked best for them and why

Keep in mind that there are multiple approaches to this, and what works best may vary from student to student. Teachers and students should experiment with different approaches, adapting and refining them, to discover the most effective one.

#### Note-taking Approach 1 Template

<b>Topic:</b> 3 students – time management problems at uni	
<b>Main idea</b> Speaker 1 Speaker 2 Speaker 3	
<b>Main idea</b> Speaker 1 Speaker 2 Speaker 3	
<b>Main idea</b> Speaker 1 Speaker 2 Speaker 3	

#### Note-taking Approach 2 Template

<b>Topic:</b> 3 students – time management problems at uni	
<b>Speaker 1</b> - - -	
<b>Speaker 2</b> - - -	
<b>Speaker 3</b> - - -	

## Note-taking Approach 1 & 2 Completed Templates

### My notes:

*T: 3 students – time management problems at uni*

*M1: Balance academic work, personal and extra curricular*

*S1 - wants to experience more than just studying/writing*

*S2 -*

*S3 -*

*M1: Juggling college schedules and time*

*S1 - each course – own schedules, requirements – difficult to create a consistent routine*

*S2 - juggling reading, assignments and projects –*

*S3 - managing time – can't get organized – feels stressed*

*M1: Long-term planning*

*S1 -*

*S2 - procrastinates till the last minute. Due date creeps up on him.*

*S3 - Similar struggle – can't long-term plan. Must multi-task – ...*

### Topic: challenges managing time at uni

#### Speaker 1:

*concerns about load*

*no consistency-complain*

*length*

*computer crash*

#### Speaker 2:

*lectures, project, exam*

*no time!*

*procrastinate – deadline rush*

*also tired*

*discipline – different to high sch., comparison/ autonomy*

*interest driven*

#### Speaker 3

*manag. time*

*stress/exhaustion*

*restarting school*

*agrees*

*long-term planning, multi-tasking- challen*

*seminar? Tomo?*

If you students are totally new to note-taking, you can introduce these strategies:

1. Use acronyms e.g. ASAP for as soon as possible, POV, for point of view
2. Use abbreviations e.g. appt. for appointment, uni for university
3. Skip vowels e.g. dvlp for develop, lstn for listen
4. Use icons/graphics: @ # \$ % ( )

Explain that in this question type, each speaker may revisit or expand on points or ideas they've already mentioned. Therefore, it is important for students to leave space around their notes, allowing them to add new information as it becomes relevant to the discussion.

### Strategy 3

Now it is time for students to provide an effective summary and practise speaking. They should aim to present their summary confidently, using the notes they have made as a guide to structure their thoughts. Each student will have up to 2 minutes to speak, so they should focus on clearly communicating the main ideas and supporting details while staying within the time limit.

The more they practise, the more comfortable they will become delivering concise, well-organized summaries.

An effective summary:

1. States what the main topic of the discussion is
2. Provides the main topics from the discussion and includes the supporting details
3. Mentions which speaker said what
4. Does not list who said/what in order. Remember this is a summary
5. Uses linking words to connect ideas together effectively
6. Uses a variety of expressions and language, and paraphrases where possible

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

- Give students a checklist of phrases they can use to structure their summary
  - "The conversation was/is about 3 students who..."
  - "They agreed that..."
  - "Speaker 1 discuss/ed various aspects of..."
  - "Speaker 2 also mentioned that..."
  - "Speaker 3 noted that..."
  - "In the end,..."

- Student A gives their spoken summary
- Student B follows along and ticks the expression they hear the speaker use from the list provided. Student B also times the summary
- After the first student finishes, they switch roles and repeat the process
- After both students have completed their summaries, they provide each other feedback on how many phrases were used and whether they covered the main ideas and supporting details

Fluency and pronunciation are also assessed in Summarize group discussion, so students need to express their ideas naturally and without hesitation, which is vital for building confidence in real-life conversations. Clear pronunciation ensures that their message is understood, minimizing misunderstandings and fostering smoother communication.

Provide the sample response in audio files [L6\_Summarize\_group\_discussion\_1\_Response\_C1]. Ask students to decide whether it is a weak or strong response. Then provide the explanation for Question 1.

### **Step 4: Respond to a Summarize Group Discussion Question**

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a question type simulating the test conditions. They will have 10 seconds to prepare, and then 2 minutes to summarize the group discussion. Remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Seat your students at separate workstations or position them in a way that they will not interfere with or disrupt others while listening and speaking. Show or read the instructions and play the audio for Question 2. Ask students to listen, take notes and record their responses on personal recording devices, such as computers and mobile phones.

### **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?

If students have recorded their answers, ask students to evaluate their responses in pairs or groups.

Provide the sample response in audio files [L6\_Summarize\_group\_discussion\_2\_Response\_C1]. Ask students to decide whether it is a weak or strong response. Then provide the explanation for Question 2.

## Question 1

*You will hear three people having a discussion. When you hear the beep, summarize the whole discussion. You will have 10 seconds to prepare and 2 minutes to give your response.*

Three students are discussing time management at university.

## Question 1: Transcript

Speaker 1: There are a lot of challenges for us at university. It's not just doing well in the courses; we have to be able to balance the academic work with a personal life and also find time to join some extracurricular activities. I mean I don't want my years at university to be only studying and writing papers.

Speaker 2: I know. There's just so much to do. I have to get to the lectures, do all the readings and assignments, complete several projects, and get ready for exams. I hardly have time to breathe.

Speaker 3: You know, it's true. My biggest challenge since I started university is managing my time. I can't seem to get myself organized and I always feel stressed and exhausted. And the worst thing is that I just seem to get organized and the term ends and I have to get used to a whole new schedule.

Speaker 1: I agree. That is really difficult. Each course has its own schedule, deadlines, and requirements. It's so difficult to create a consistent routine so I can allocate my time effectively. And everything seems to take longer than I thought.

Speaker 2: The worst part is that I often procrastinate and put off tasks until the last minute. I think to myself, oh I have lots of time for that, I have a whole week before it's due. Then all of a sudden, the due date is in two days and I'm rushed and don't do a very good job.

Speaker 3: That's happened to me so many times. The deadlines are weeks or months away and I have trouble with long-term planning. It's hard to plan so far ahead but you have to or you end up rushed. The problem is that you have to learn to multi-task and I was never very good at that. I like to finish one project and start on another. But that's impossible when all the projects and essays are due at the same time at the end of the term. You really have to be able to multi-task at university, you have to be able to jump from one topic to another and one type of assignment to another.

Speaker 1: Then, just when you think everything's under control, the computer crashes!

Speaker 2: If I could manage my time better, I probably wouldn't be so stressed and exhausted. I've never had to discipline myself like this before. In high school, the teachers told you what to do and when to do it. If you just did what they said, you were fine. But in university, it's up to you to prioritize what tasks are the most important and should be done first. It seems I spend too much time on less important tasks because I like them or they are easier, then I don't have time for the more important ones.

Speaker 3: I guess not managing your time effectively means that you end up working more than you really need to and you feel so tired and sort of burnt out. I think the university offers a seminar on time management. Maybe we should all go.

## Question 1: Sample Response

The three speakers were talking about the various challenges they face at university, especially with respect to time management. So the first speaker talked about his concerns about his workload. He seemed very concerned and somewhat stressed. He mentioned that he had no consistency in what he does and he had a particular concern about the length of the course and some of the workload. He also mentioned something interesting which was around challenges with his computer crashing, that was kind of said in relation to his time management issues. The second speaker also talked about the number of lectures and projects and exams that they have and said that they're not very good with time management as well, especially because of procrastination. And this speaker mentioned that they have lots of or that they rush when there's a deadline. Because they tend to find themselves focusing on things that interest them rather than things that are important. This person also mentioned an issue with discipline and made a comparison with high school where teachers sort of tell you what to do or provide your schedule, whereas at university you have greater autonomy over what you're supposed to do. The third speaker agreed with much of what was said and also had an issue with procrastination, the same as Speaker 2. The third speaker talked about time management issues, stress and also exhaustion being tired. The third speaker talks about long-term planning is key and also multitasking as an important attribute. But said that this is sort of challenging to achieve. In the end, the third speaker mentioned something about a seminar on time management and suggested that they attend that because it might help them out.



## Question 1: Explanations

**Audio** [L6\_Summarize\_group\_discussion\_1\_Response\_C1]

The response is clear, accurate, and demonstrates full comprehension of the discussion by paraphrasing the main ideas in their own words. They expand on the details of each speaker's contribution with specificity, ensuring that the nuances of each perspective are captured effectively. The ideas are well connected and organized in a logical sequence, with simple connective devices used to ensure the response flows well and is easy to follow.

## Question 2

*You will hear three people having a discussion. When you hear the beep, summarize the whole discussion. You will have 10 seconds to prepare and 2 minutes to give your response.*

Three students are discussing their professors.

## Question 2: Transcript

Speaker 1: Hey, have you guys noticed how different professors have such varied teaching styles? It's like each one has their own approach to delivering the information.

Speaker 2: Yeah, it's interesting how the way they teach can really affect how we understand and engage with the content. I mean, Professor Smith's lectures are so structured. Every class follows the same pattern with clear outlines, and he goes step by step through the material. It's great for keeping track, but sometimes it feels a bit too rigid.

Speaker 3: I get what you mean. On the other hand, Professor Lopez is all about interactive learning. She encourages discussions and group activities. It's refreshing, but I sometimes find it hard to cover the material thoroughly in class.

Speaker 1: : For sure, And then there's Professor Wu. I can barely predict what's going to happen in her class. One day she's giving a passionate lecture, the next she's showing a documentary, and then suddenly we're having a debate. It keeps things exciting, but I sometimes feel a bit lost. But you know who I really appreciate? Professor Marino. He uses real-world examples to explain complex theories, and his enthusiasm is infectious. It's like he's on a mission to make sure we grasp the practical applications of what we're learning.

Speaker 2: I Agree. And remember Professor Patel's class last semester? She had this flipped classroom approach where we learned the concepts on our own before coming to class, and then she focused on solving problems and answering questions during class time. It was effective, but it required a lot of pre-class preparation.

Speaker 3: Oh! I remember that. It was challenging at first, but I ended up learning a lot. But let's talk about Professor Taha. She's all about technology. From online quizzes to virtual labs, she's constantly integrating digital tools into her teaching. It's innovative, but sometimes I miss the human connection.

Speaker 1: That's true. It's a balancing act, isn't it? I think a mix of teaching styles can actually be beneficial. Some concepts are best explained with interactive discussions, while others require a more straightforward approach. It's about finding what works for each subject and adapting to the needs of the students. And as students, we also play a role in how we respond to these teaching styles. Some of us thrive in a structured environment, while others excel when given the freedom to explore and discuss.

Speaker 2: And you know, these diverse teaching methods also prepare us for the real world. In our careers, we'll encounter different communication styles and learning approaches, so being adaptable is a valuable skill. It's all part of the learning experience. We're not just absorbing content; we're also learning how to learn effectively in various scenarios. Despite the challenges, we're actually gaining a lot from experiencing these different teaching styles.

Speaker 3: Exactly! It's like a puzzle, and each professor's style is a piece that contributes to our overall understanding. I guess the key is to stay open-minded, engage actively, and make the most of what each professor has to offer.

## Question 2: Sample Response

There are three university students are talking about their professors and different teaching styles they use to deliver information. They talk about the differences and the advantages and the disadvantages of these teaching approaches. The first topic is about how lessons are structured or engaging. Speaker 2 says Professor Smith's lectures are structured and step by step, which is great for keeping track but too rigid whereas Speaker, 3, says Professor Lopez, different professor, focuses on interactive learning which encourages group tasks, but sometimes the learning material is not covered. Speaker 1 adds that Professor Lu has a very unpredictable structure when teaching. Then the students go on to talk about different teaching techniques used in the classroom. Speaker 3 mentions that Professor will use debates, which is exciting, and Professor Marion, which speaker 1 mentions, uses real world examples to explain concepts, complex concepts and theories. They go on to talk about technology as well. Speaker 2 says Professor Patel uses flip learning so students can learn concepts before class, which is effective but takes a lot of pre class preparation whereas Speaker 3 sites Professor Taha as an example of someone who uses technology; she uses online quizzes and virtual labs. Finally, all three speakers agree that a diverse and eclectic teaching *process* is needed, and there are benefits to this. Speaker 1 says the approach taken by a professor depends on the concepts being introduced. It can be interactive, it it, but it does need to be adapted to each student, and structured. Speaker 2 agrees and says diverse methods help prepare them for the real world learning how to learn effectively and finally speak through concludes by saying each professor, through their own style, is contributing to their understanding as a student and they need to keep an open mind to make the most of how each professor teaches.

## Question 2: Explanations

**Audio** [L6\_Summarize\_group\_discussion\_2\_Response\_C1]

The response is exceptionally detailed, demonstrating thorough comprehension by paraphrasing main ideas and expanding on each speaker's contribution with specificity. They effectively explore relationships between different points of view, using a wide range of expressions and complex cohesive devices to ensure the response flows smoothly and is easy to follow.