

How to Answer

Question 1: What's the Passage About?

Qs 1-2 focus on the whole passage. We start out getting an overall idea of the text and identifying areas to explore further.

1. Read the study passage from start to finish at least once; more if it doesn't make sense to you on the first read.
2. Decide if the text is more like a **story**—one event following another in a prescribed sequence (i.e., chronological order)—or a discussion of one or more **topics**.
3. In your study journal, summarize the most important aspects of the text:
 - If you found a **story** taking place, list all the events.
 - If you found **topics** being discussed, write the first one in your notes and list all the points made about that topic there, even if the author didn't group them together in the passage. Continue noting the remaining topics and their points the same way.
4. Go back through your summary and add chapter/verse notations for each event or topical point so you can quickly find where that item was discussed in the text itself.
5. Go through your summary again. Highlight anything you don't understand or doesn't make sense.
6. Go through your summary one more time and double underline anything that catches your attention or feels especially relevant to you as you study it.

Hints & Hacks

- Once you get the hang of creating summaries, you can combine steps 1-4 and steps 5-6 to speed up the process.
- Don't cheat! It may seem easier to just copy an outline from a commentary or chapter introduction, but doing so means you're adopting someone else's organization of the material that may not be divinely inspired. Moreover, taking the time to organize it yourself gives the Holy Spirit a chance to bring certain elements to your attention (step 6, above). As you work through the remaining questions, the Holy Spirit will use these elements to help you personalize your study.