

Summary writing techniques essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

1. Outlining

An outline is a structural skeleton of the main points of the material as they appear in chronological, rather than logical, order.

2. Paraphrase

Paraphrasing, the restatement of another writer's ideas in your own words

3. Summary

Summarizing, the brief restatement of a longer text in fewer words than the original text. The most important feature of a summary is that it is short, almost always fewer than 250 words. It is a piece of writing about another piece of writing. Its purpose is to condense a long piece of writing into a concise summation of its meaning. Note: Summaries are short accounts of things (including texts).

4. Precis

Short accounts of texts only.

B. Why teach Summary?

To help students:

1. In English

2. In other subjects

3. In the real world.

C. Sub-Skills which students need to develop

Reading

Students need to read as much as they can to broaden their knowledge of the language as much as possible.

Comprehension

By extension, students must be able to follow and understand narrative, appreciate argument, follow sequencing and anticipate consequences when they are reading. Above all they must be able to analyse what they read.

Selection of Information

identify the main topic

become aware of the gist of the passage

identify topic sentences and key words and phrases in each paragraph

extract supporting ideas

(the ability to do this will rest on skimming and scanning)

Elimination of Superfluous Information

examples, figures of speech, illustrations, repetitions and unnecessary descriptive language must be omitted.

Compression

wherever possible, phrases must be replaced by single words such as collective nouns or pronouns. Generalizations can be used to represent detailed information.

Note taking

Avoid copying sentences or large sections of text verbatim into the summary. Students should be encouraged to write notes which can be used as ‘stepping stones’ between original text and final summary.

Composition skills

The final summary must be clear, connected and readable with the substance and gist of the original preserved.

Vocabulary skills

The broader the vocabulary of students, the greater will be their ability to manipulate text. Synonyms are important as are words of categorisation, pronouns and conjunctions.

Grammatical flexibility

Students must develop skills in selecting structures which will enable them to manipulate text in order to achieve economy and efficiency.

Writing to word limits/answering the question

Students must not let the word limit blind them to the need to address specific elements in the question. In other words, they need to read and understand the question with all its ramifications.

(adapted from: Summary Writing in Secondary Schools: a Collection of ideas and resources for teachers: CfBT Education Services)

D. Tips on Writing Summaries

Step One (Prewriting):

Read the article quickly.

Try to get a sense of the article's focus and content.

Step Two (Drafting):

Restate the article's thesis simply and in your own words.

Restate each paragraph's topic simply and in your own words.

Step Three (Revising):

Combine sentences in Step Two to form your summary; organize your summary sentences in the same order as the main ideas in the original text.

E. A Good Summary of an entire source (paragraph, article, etc.)

Clearly identifies the author and source of the material, preferably in the first sentence.

Periodically indicates that a long summary is still the material of another author by inserting phrases like “ He goes on to point out. . .” “ The article also maintains that. . . ,” etc.

Begins with the author's main point and contains only the key supporting details.

Expresses the author's words or ideas in your own words, but does not include your own opinions about the author's ideas or about the subject under discussion.

Quotes directly from the work only if absolutely necessary.

Preserves, as much as possible, the order, balance and proportion, and emphasis of the original work. (In order to preserve the author's emphasis, you may occasionally have to change his/her order.)

F. Other Important Issues to consider when Summarising

When summarizing only a portion of a work for inclusion in a research or term paper, make sure that the material clearly relates to the point you are making; make sure that the material serves your purpose.

A paraphrase or summary of someone else's writing can rarely stand alone; it must be explained or interpreted by your own words. It is also important that you not distort the author's original meaning by omitting or changing his/her ideas when you paraphrase or summarize.

Do not leave yourself open to any plagiarism – In general, the citation of the author's name or the title of his/her work in your text signals to your reader that you are starting to use source material. If the name or title is not cited in your text, readers may not be aware that a new source has been introduced until they reach the parenthetical note or superscript. The reader

may not know where your thoughts have ended and the author's have begun. If you do not cite your author by name or mention the title of the source, be certain to use your own voice to provide continuity between quotations: " One study reports..." " Other researchers indicate...."

G. Process for Writing a Summary

Read with the Writer's Purpose in Mind

Read the article carefully, making no notes or marks and looking only for what the writer is saying.

After you're finished reading, write down in one sentence the point that is made about the subject. Then look for the writer's thesis and underline it.

o Does this thesis correspond with the sentence you wrote down? If not, adjust your sentence or reconsider the thesis you selected.

o Look at the article again and ask yourself if your view is slanted toward one of the essay's minor points. If it is, adjust your sentence so that it is slanted toward the writer's major point.

Underline with Summarizing in Mind

Once you clearly understand the writer's major point (or purpose) for writing, read the article again. This time underline the major points supporting the thesis; these should be words or phrases here and there rather than complete sentences.

In addition, underline key transitional elements which show how parts are connected. Omit specific details, examples, description, and unnecessary explanations. Note: you may need to go through the article twice in order to pick up everything you need.

Write, Revise, and Edit to Ensure the Accuracy and Correctness of Your Summary

Writing Your Summary

Now begin writing your summary. Start with a sentence naming the writer and article title and stating the essay's main idea. Then write your summary, omitting nothing important and striving for overall coherence through appropriate transitions.

Be concise, using coordination and subordination to compress ideas.

Conclude with a final statement reflecting the significance of the article — not from your own point of view but from the writer's.

Throughout the summary, do not insert your own opinions or thoughts; instead summarize what the writer has to say about the subject.

Revising Your Summary

After you've completed a draft, read your summary and check for accuracy.

- o Does your summary make the same point as the article?
- o Have you omitted anything important?

o Does your summary read smoothly with all parts clearly related?

Keep in mind that a summary should generally be no more than one-fourth the length of the original. If your summary is too long, cut out words rather than ideas. Then look for non-essential information and delete it.

Write another draft — still a draft for revision — and ask someone to read it critically.

o Can that person understand the sense of the article by reading your summary?

o Ask for criticism; then weigh these criticisms and make valid changes.

Editing Your Summary

Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, looking particularly for those common in your writing.

Write a clean draft and proofread for copying errors.