Summarizing

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a summary is 'a short statement that gives only the main points of something, not the details [1].'

Why summarizing?

- To give the gist of a more elaborated and longer piece of writing, speech, process, experiment etc.

- To show your understanding of the content discussed in detail.

- To support your points & ideas by summarizing ideas and points taken from other sources.

- To avoid plagiarism

Summarizing Strategies (for technical writing)

- Skim through the content to understand the main idea
- Thoroughly study each paragraph to get an in-depth understanding
- Check the dictionary if you come across new or difficult vocabulary
- Identify & highlight important information (Identifying the topic sentence of each paragraph helps understand the main point discussed in each section.)
- Note down the main points in your own words
- Note down only the relevant technical terms needed to include in the summary
- Do not alter the meaning
- Be precise and concise

Writing Summaries

- Eliminate wordiness (including unnecessary adverbs & adjectives)

    Ex: "The results clearly showed that there was no difference between the groups" can be shortened to "There was no significant difference between the groups"

- Use specific, concrete language & avoid vague references

    Ex: "this illustrates" should be "this result illustrates"

    "there is this theory of evolution that talks about" should be "Charles Darwin's theory of evolution elaborates"

- Use scientifically accurate language.

    Ex: You cannot "prove" hypotheses (especially with just one study). You "support" or "fail to find support for" them.

- Do not use direct quotes, use your own words

- Do not give elaborate examples & definitions

- Refer the source and the writer/ speaker when necessary

How to identify the topic sentence?

Topic Sentence is "a sentence that expresses the main idea of the paragraph in which it occurs [3]." Typically, the main idea of a paragraph is expressed in the first or the last sentence. See the highlighted sentences in the examples given below:

Ex: The World Wide Web has radically altered the way we share knowledge by lowering the barrier to publishing and accessing documents as part of a global information space. Hypertext links allow users to traverse this information space using Web browsers, while search engines index the documents and analyse the structure of links between them to infer potential relevance to users' search queries (Brin & Page, 1998). This functionality has been enabled by the generic, open and extensible nature of the Web (Jacobs & Walsh, 2004), which is also seen as a key feature in the Web's unconstrained growth [4].

Ex: Whiteboards haven't come very far since they were first introduced in meeting rooms during the 1950s. While messy pens and paper have given way to electronic counterparts, these remain largely unused. Many still suffer from the "Do Not Erase!" problem, where information is lost either locally or to participants not in attendance. Collective ideas shouldn't disappear just because a presentation moves on to the next screen or page. What's needed is an interactive digital whiteboard, a model that was viewed as a most important trend by 77 percent of industry leaders at the IACC conference on the Meeting Room of the Future – one that automatically saves content securely and displays it upon demand, so writing "Do Not Erase" becomes a practice of the past [5].

Example Summary

Text to summarize in a maximum of 50 words

The name Google is no longer foreign to any internet user. It has now become a household name to anyone that uses internet. It began as the research product of two PhD students and went on to become a multibillionaire company. Though Google has held monopoly in the realm of search engines, analysts and few internet pundits are now predicting that Google might be at a verge of deterioration when it comes to money making and generating revenue. Not many know, but Google's prime source of income is advertising. Google makes money by selling its user data to other companies so as to place better advertisements to the most eligible target customers and make a sale. Therefore, Google rapidly sought customer data and optimized all the advertisements based on it. But as time is passing by, the computer literacy among people is increasing at a steady pace and they're now aware of what cyber security is. Along with development and ease of internet usage, people have also incurred significant damage due to security and personal data breach through the illegal activities of crackers. Therefore, so as to prevent cyber-attacks and stay secure, people have stopped giving much of their personal data to Google like before. In such cases, we can expect a steady downfall of Google's revenue generation. Until and unless the business model gets modified and optimized to suit the current situation, we cannot expect Google to thrive in the coming days.

Example Summary cont.

Discuss with your partner

1. Carefully re-read the text and use the ideas in the Summarizing Strategies slide to find the topic sentence and 2-3 main points being made by the author of the text. (**brainstorm & organize**)

2. Open a Word document and **draft** these 2-3 main points using the techniques given in the slide on Writing Summaries.

3. Re-read the text again and check that you have captured the main ideas in it and have not. **Improve** your draft to have a coherent, grammatically correct paragraph.

4. Finally, **revise** your summary to the required length.

Example Summary cont.

Possible Summary:

According to the author, Google needs to change its income generation model to suit the present requirements to succeed. Instead of depending on selling user data, which is increasingly becoming difficult to obtain due to growing awareness of cyber security, Google should consider other income avenues.

References:

- [1]A. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 7th ed. Oxford [: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005.

- [2]*Depts.washington.edu*, 2018. [Online]. Available: https://depts.washington.edu/psych/files/writing_center/summarizing.pdf. [Accessed: 26- Aug- 2018].

- [3]"topic sentence | Definition of topic sentence in English by Oxford Dictionaries", Oxford Dictionaries | English, 2018. [Online]. Available: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/topic_sentence. [Accessed: 27- Aug- 2018].

- [4]C. Bizer, T. Heath and T. Berners-Lee, "Linked Data - The Story So Far", International Journal on Semantic Web and Information Systems, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 1-22, 2009.

- [5]D. Christopher and S. Peruvemba, "content - IEEECS", Computer.org, 2018. [Online]. Available: https://www.computer.org/web/computingnow/networking/content?g=53319&type=article&url Title=five-common-complaints-about-meetings-that-smart-conference-rooms-can-put-to-rest. [Accessed: 27- Aug- 2018].

- [6]"PTE Writing – Summary Writing Samples | PTE Tutorials", *PTE Tutorials*, 2018. [Online]. Available: https://ptetutorials.com/sample-questions/writing-summarize-written-text. [Accessed: 26- Aug- 2018].