**Summary Writing Format**

* When writing a summary, remember that it should be in the form of a paragraph.
* A summary begins with an introductory sentence that states the text’s title, author and main point of the text as you see it.
* A summary is written in your own words.
* A summary contains only the ideas of the original text. Do not insert any of your own opinions, interpretations, deductions or comments into a summary.
* Identify in order the significant sub-claims the author uses to defend the main point.
* Underline (word-for-word) separate passages from the essay that you think support and/or defend the main point of the essay as you see it.
* Cite, if necessary, each passage by first signaling the work and the author, put “quotation marks” around the passage you chose, and put the number of the paragraph where the passages can be found immediately after the passage.
* Using source material from the essay is important. Why? Because defending claims with source material is what you will be asked to do when writing papers for your college professors.
* Write a last sentence that “wraps” up your summary; often a simple rephrasing of the main point.

*Example Summary Writing Format*

In the essay Santa Ana, author Joan Didion’s main point is (state main point). According to Didion “…passage 1…” (para.3). Didion also writes “…passage 2…” (para.8). Finally, she states “…passage 3…” (para. 12). Write a last sentence that “wraps” up your summary; often a simple rephrasing of the main point.

**How to write?**

**Strategy:**

**Step 1**: Actively read the text. Annotate and Highlight

**Step 2**: Identify the author’s main idea and major supporting points. Paraphrase them.

**Step 3**: Organize paraphrased main points into an outline or concept map.

**Step 4**: Use transition words to combine main points into a clear and unified summary.

**Step 5:** Include an introductory sentence with author tag and source information.

**Step 6**: Check summary against original. Revise as needed.

**E.g**. Sample Introductory Sentence: *According to John Smith (2015), author of Pocahontas is My Love, Native American women value a deep spiritual connection to the environment.*

*Introductory sentence frame*

According to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (author's name) \_\_\_\_(year), author of "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ,” (title of article) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(main idea).

• In his/her article "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ,” (title of article) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (year) \_\_\_\_(author) states (another reporting verb) that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (main idea/argument).

• \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_'s (author's name) article “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “ (title of article) \_\_\_\_(year) discusses (another reporting verb) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (main idea).

• \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (author's name) \_\_\_\_\_(year), in his/her article, "\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_"(title of article) argues (reporting verb) that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (main idea).

**Useful vocabulary**

**Reporting verbs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Function and strength** | **Example verbs** |
| **NEUTRAL:**  These verbs are most often used in summaries to say what the writer describes in factual terms. | articulates, assumes, believes, concludes, defines, demonstrates, describes, discovers, discusses, evaluates, explains, examines, finds, highlights, identifies, indicates, lists, mentions, notes, observes, outlines, points out, reports, reveals, shows, states, studies, suggests, takes into consideration, thinks, writes |
| **WEAK:**  These verbs are used to say that the writer  suggests or speculates on a topic (without being absolutely certain). | hypothesizes, implies, intimates, poses the view  that, postulates, proposes, questions the view  that, recommends, speculates, suggests |
| **STRONG:**  These verbs are used to say that the writer  makes strong arguments and claims for the main idea. | argues, asserts, challenges, claims, contends,  denies, emphasizes, maintains, rejects, supports the view that, strongly counters  the view/argument that, theorizes |

**“Reminder phrases**”:

* The author goes on to say that ...
* The article (author) further states that ...
* (Author's last name) also states/maintains/argues that ...
* (Author's last name) also believes that ...
* (Author's last name) concludes that