

A summary is a shortened or condensed version of a reading.

- Only includes the most important concepts or ideas.
- Used to explain the content of the reading to someone who has not read it.
- Written in your own words with a minimal use of direct quotes.

What do you need in a summary?

- Accuracy
 - Did you report the author's ideas accurately?
- Completeness
 - Did you include all the key points or main ideas?
- Emphasis
 - Did you replicate the importance the author placed on certain ideas?
- Readability
 - Did you write it in an easy-to-understand paragraph form?
- Your Own Words
 - Did you mostly use your own words and put all of the author's words in quotation marks?

Reading for a Summary:

To write a summary, you need to understand the reading and its main ideas. This will include:

1. The thesis or overall main idea.
If possible, paraphrase it in your own words.
2. The sections into which the paper is divided.
Identify the sections or divisions that the author used to organize the work. This is similar to making an outline for the reading.
3. The support used to back up the author's key points.
Take note of what the author used to support his/her statements, e.g., the most important examples, arguments, statistics, expert opinion, etc.

Create an Outline:

Writing a summary is much easier to do from an outline, which will also provide you a writing plan for your summary.

- At the top of the outline, write the thesis.
- Make an outline of the supporting ideas you would like to include in the summary.

Two Types of Summaries:

1. The author's name is mentioned throughout the text of your summary.
2. The author is only mentioned in brackets at the end of the summary.

Three Tips for Writing a Summary:

- In the first sentence, identify the author, the title of the work, and the thesis statement.
- Write in paragraph form with clear transitions between major points.
- Organize the ideas in the same order as the original.

What to Avoid when Writing a Summary:

- Repetition of similar ideas.
- Minor details (e.g., examples, anecdotes, descriptions, statistics, and dialogue).
- Direct quotes (unless there is no other way to give the information).
- Digressions from the main points.
- Your own personal opinions or comments on the subject.