Summarizing a text can help you both to see the relationships among its ideas and to understand what it's saying. When you summarize, you restate a text's main ideas in your own words, leaving out most examples and other details.

## Identifying Patterns

- Look for notable patterns in the text: recurring words and their synonyms, repeated phrases and metaphors, and types of sentences. Some writers find it helps to highlight patterns in various colors.
- Does the author rely on any particular writing strategies?
- Consider the kind of evidence offered: Is it more opinion than fact? Nothing but statistics? If many sources are cited, is the information presented in any predominant patterns: as **Quotations?**
  **Paraphrases?**
  **Summaries?**
- Are there repeated references to certain experts or sources?
- In visual texts, look for patterns of color, shape, and line. In both verbal and visual texts, look for what isn't there that you would expect to find.
- Is there anything that doesn't really fit in?
- If you discover patterns, consider what, if anything, they mean in terms of what the writer is saying. For example, what do they reveal about the writer's underlying beliefs or strategies of persuasion?

## Count up the parts

This is a two-step process. First, you count things: words, phrases, or sentences that seem important. Or
you might select a few typical paragraphs on which to focus. After you count, see what you can conclude about the writing.

- *Count words*. Count one-, two-, three-syllable words, repeated words, active and passive verbs,
prepositions, jargon or specialized terms.
- *Count sentences*. Count the number of words in each sentence; the number of sentences in each
paragraph; the number of simple sentences, compound sentences, fragments, repeated phrases, and
so on.
- *Count paragraphs*. Count the number of paragraphs and the average number of sentences per
paragraph. Consider the position of the longest and shortest paragraphs. Find parallel paragraph
structures.
- *Count images*. List verbal or visual images, similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech.
What do your findings tell you about the text? What do certain words or images tell you about the writer—or about his or her stance? Do your findings suggest a strategy, a plan for your analysis?