

# Summaries

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How to prepare and write  
a good summary

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- ☐ Definition
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# A summary

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- ❑ answers the question:
  - ❑ What is the author really saying?
- ❑ is an essential condensation of an article in your words
- ❑ stresses the author's emphasis and interpretation (doesn't show the readers critique or opinion)
- ❑ is the result of careful "listening" to the author

# Purposes of Summaries

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- ❑ to provide a quick overview of the material
- ❑ to show the reader of the summary that you have understood the material and can express the ideas in your words
- ❑ to enable you to better understand someone else's material
- ❑ to introduce knowledge within a research context

# Summary versus Quotation

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- S. is more economical than a quotation.
- Don't forget:
  - quote only if the author expresses a point in a particularly interesting language
  - indicate quotations (use quotation marks)
  - Don't "borrow whole sentences"

# How to Summarize a Paragraph

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- ☐ read twice
- ☐ isolate topic sentence
- ☐ check whether it conveys meaning of paragraph
- ☐ underline key phrases
- ☐ look for crucial distinctions
- ☐ write your own summarizing sentence
- ☐ make use of key phrases /distinctions

# How to Summarize an Article

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- ☐ Ask yourself
  - Why was the article written?
  - Who is the intended audience?
  - What is the author's background; any special bias or point of view?
- ☐ Compare opening and closing.
- ☐ Read the entire article more than once.
- ☐ Underline key or repeated words and phrases, resp.
- ☐ Distinguish main ideas from details to support the idea.
- ☐ Draft a several sentence summary.

# How to Summarize a Complex Article

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- ☐ Preview article.
- ☐ Skim headings and first sentences.
- ☐ Explore the text (clarify difficult terms with dictionary).
- ☐ Read opening and closing paragraph.
- ☐ Read the article at least twice.
- ☐ Isolate each important point.
- ☐ State the thesis of the article in one sentence.
- ☐ note how ideas are related to each other:
  - comparison/contrast
  - cause-effect relations
  - problem-solution



# Write your Summary

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- ❑ Reconstruct the author's argument from your list of important ideas
- ❑ Draw attention to the relationship between ideas
- ❑ Use transitional phrases (nevertheless, however, in contrast)

# Your Summary Should

- ☐ read like a coherent, unified paragraph
- ☐ account for most of what the author says in your own words
- ☐ maintain a neutral, impartial tone
- ☐ shouldn't be longer than 25 % of the text (often even shorter)

# Structure your Summary

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## ☐ Beginning

- ☐ write an opening sentence that includes the name of the author, the title of the piece you're summarizing, and makes it clear that you are writing a summary.

## ☐ Middle

- ☐ include all essential points in your own words

## ☐ End

- ☐ round up your summary

# Beginning Phrases (I)

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- A writer
  - gives/ presents/ writes/ a summary of ...
- S/he sums up/ summarizes
  - the content of a (speech/ newspaper article...)
- To sum up/ to summarize/ in sum/ to put it briefly/ to put it in a nutshell

# Beginning Phrases (II)

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- ☐ In brief, ...
- ☐ In short, ...
- ☐ In simple words, ...
- ☐ In simpler terms, ...

# Phrases for the Middle (I)

- In his text/story/report on ...(author) speaks of (an event, incident ...)...
  - claims that/ argues that/ explains how/ demands that ....
- The writer
  - opens with/ introduces his text/ story with ...
- S/he deals with (the topic)
  - in (three) steps/ subdivisions

# Phrases for the Middle (II)

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## □ S/he ...

- presents/ considers/ distinguishes/ lists ...
- Furthermore,/ additionally,/ in connection to ...
- (four) main arguments on support of/ aspects of/ elements in/ demands/ principles/ maxims

# Phrases for Ending a Summary

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- ☐ The writer closes his text with ...
- ☐ In his concluding sentence /passage the writer refers to ...
- ☐ At the end/finally, the writer speaks about ...