

Math 300 Summary Paper Rubric

You will choose a published math paper to write an approximately two- to three-page summary of. You should explain the basic result or conclusion of the paper, explain how the paper reaches this conclusion, and explain why we should care.

The goal of this assignment is to learn to communicate about mathematical ideas to an audience unfamiliar with the ideas you're discussing. You should think of the audience as being your fellow math majors: mathematically skilled but unfamiliar with the specific topic and field you are working in. Try not to get bogged down in the weeds of detailed calculations, technical arguments, or details of proofs.

The paper you choose to summarize must be at least six pages long. A good place to look for papers that are an appropriate level for you are The College Math Journal or Mathematics Magazine. These are both publications of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). You are all members because Occidental is an institutional member, which means you can log in and look through the journals to find a paper you like. To login, your username is your Oxy e-mail address and your password is firstinitial.lastname.20036, so John Doe's password would be jdoe.20036 for example. Once you login you should change your password. Likely you already received an e-mail with your login information.

Your paper will be graded on the following rubric:

4 points: Title

The paper should have a clear title, give the name of the author and the author's college affiliation, and nothing else.

6 points: Abstract

Your paper should have an abstract, which is a 2-4 sentence sales pitch for the paper. Your abstract should explain briefly what you will explain in your summary paper, and why the reader should care. Obviously this is a summary, and these ideas should be expanded on in the main body of the paper. Use the `\LaTeX{abstract}` environment for this.

10 points: Narrative

Any good paper should tell a story. What is the key story of the paper you're summarizing? What is the basic takeaway?

10 points: Context

Why should we care about this paper? Why is its subject matter important or interesting? Explain how this paper relates to the real world or to other interesting mathematics. Why was the paper written?

10 points: Writing style

Your paper should be well-organized, with transitions that flow from one section to the next. It should be free of obvious grammatical and spelling errors, and formatted legibly. (If the act of reading your paper is painful or unpleasant, this is where I can take points off).

20 points: Mathematics

Explain the key mathematical idea of the paper. What exactly is the paper trying to establish? What is the outline of the argument the paper uses to establish this? What tools does the paper need to use to establish its claim? Make sure your mathematical claims are correct and precise.