

### *Other Expressions of Similarity and Contrast*

#### **To Show Similarity**

*to be similar to*

*to resemble*

*to be comparable to*

*to correspond to*

The conclusion that emerges from this study is similar to that in Lee et al. (2010).

#### **To Show Contrast**

*to differ from*

*to contrast with*

*to be different from*

The conclusion in this study differs from that in Barber et al. (2011).

Take a look at the second discussion in Task Fourteen. Find the devices used by the author to highlight similarity or difference.

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## **TASK FIFTEEN**

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Review and respond to the task you created for yourself in Task Thirteen (Item 5). Alternatively, come up with a yes-no question on a topic in your field that you are interested in exploring. Find three or four published journal articles that you can use to respond to your question. Using the articles you have chosen, write up your response to your question. Note that your response may in fact resemble a brief literature review. For a more in-depth exploration of writing literature reviews, you may want to consult *Telling a Research Story: Writing a Literature Review*, which is published by the University of Michigan Press (Feak and Swales, 2009).

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*Like X, Y . . .*

Like in the U.S., the average four-year-old in Australia watches several hours of TV daily.

*the same . . .*

According to Macey (2011), the average four-year-old in the U.S. watches approximately four hours of TV each day. Four-year-olds in Australia view about the same number hours of TV daily (Smuda, 2010).

*as well*

Macey (2011) interviewed 250 parents of young children. Kim (2010) interviewed a similar number of parents as well.

### To Show Contrast

*In contrast, . . .*

In contrast to Nigerians, 28% of whom have internet access, Liberians have very limited opportunities to connect to the internet.

*Unlike X, Y . . .*

Unlike Indonesians who have limited access to the internet, the majority of Japanese have easy access.

*In contrast to . . .*

In contrast to the U.K. where internet access is widespread, less than 10 percent of the population in India can connect to the internet.

*On the other hand, . . .*

In developed countries internet access is viewed as a necessity. In most African countries, on the other hand, it is a luxury.

*. . . ; however, . . .*

*. . . . However, . . .*

Overall, just over 30% of the world's population has internet access; however, only 11% of Africans have this same opportunity.

*, but . . .*

Nearly 45% of the Turkish population can easily access the internet, but in nearby Syria this is possible for only 20% of the population.

*Whereas . . . , . . .*

*. . . , whereas . . .*

Whereas 16% of Argentinians have internet access, only 8% of Columbians do.

*While . . . , . . .*

*. . . , while . . .*

While 87% of South Koreans consider themselves to be frequent internet users, 50% of Brazilians do so (Lee, 2011).

tions, overlapping views, and important differences in the research. This is accomplished because the author has organized the discussion in terms of the topics addressed, rather than according to the studies at hand. It is difficult enough deciding what information to include in a summary of one article, but when working with two or more sources, clearly your job becomes even more complicated.

If you are writing a comparative summary or a discussion of two or more texts, to begin you may want to set up a chart, table, diagram, or even spreadsheet that includes your articles and the key points they address. Once you have all of your key information before you, you may have an easier time “eyeballing” the literature, making connections, and, most importantly, finding enough common threads. In short, you may be able to “see things that have not quite been seen before” and display this understanding to your reader (Feak and Swales, 2009).

When working with multiple sources you may find it useful to incorporate some common language of comparison and contrast.



### Language Focus: Showing Similarities and Differences

#### To Show Similarity

*Similarly,*

According to Macey (2011), the average four-year-old in the U.S. watches approximately four hours of TV each day. Similarly, those in Australia view about 3.5 hours of TV daily (Smuda, 2010).

*Similar to*

Similar to Kim (2008), Macey (2011) found that the average four-year-old in the U.S. watches four hours of TV each day (Smuda, 2010).

*Likewise, . . .*

Macey (2011) found that the average four-year-old in the U.S. watches four hours of TV each day. Likewise, in Australia four-year-olds watch several hours of TV daily.

*As in X, in Y . . .*

As in Australia, the average four-year-old in the U.S. watches more than three hours of TV each day (Macey, 2011).

mechanism from their ancient ancestors. 9 In other words, humans still have the same response mechanism as monkeys who hear a warning cry. 10 In related research, McDermott and Hauser (2004) explored reactions of humans and a type of monkey known as a tamarin to blackboard scraping sounds and screeching, respectively, as well as their reactions to some white noise. 11 Both humans and tamarins had similar reactions to the unpleasant sounds. 12 However, they differed considerably in their perceptions of white noise. 13 While humans clearly preferred white noise to blackboard scraping, the tamarins reacted to this noise as negatively as they did to screeching. 14 These findings call into question Blake's theory that primates, both human and non-human, have the same underlying mechanism for reacting to sounds.

15 Unlike studies exploring a biological basis for perceptions of sound, Cox proposed that humans may find certain sounds highly unpleasant when they can visualize creating those sounds. 16 Cox found that the sound of fingernails scraping on a blackboard was perceived as much worse when participants were shown a picture of a hand on a blackboard. 17 He concluded that the visualization of and possible tactile association with making a sound, particularly one that is unpleasant, are significant factors in the perception of the degree of unpleasantness. 18 Thus, the frequency of a sound may be somewhat less important than previously thought. 19 Given the small number of studies, however, it remains unclear why certain sounds, particularly scraping sounds, are almost universally perceived as extremely unpleasant, suggesting the need for more research.

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As you noticed, the first text in Task Fourteen, while accurate in terms of content, fails to highlight the similarities and/or differences among the different studies. As such, it is difficult to see what point is being developed. The author has missed the opportunity to reveal a broader understanding, causing the reader more work to find the important information on his or her own. In the second text, the writer has revealed an ability to see connec-

- 4. *I am not getting a sense that you understand where the field stands as to why certain sounds are considered really unpleasant. Can you revise to reflect your understanding?*
- 5. *What is the upshot of McDermott and Hauser's study? What is the larger implication?*
- 6. *Does the study by Cox mean that the frequency of a sound is not a factor? Can you comment on this?*

Now read this second draft and discuss with a partner how it differs from the previous one. Has the author positioned herself as knowledgeable and capable? Explain your conclusion.

2. ❶ The acoustic environment contains many sounds that are considered extremely unpleasant. ❷ To understand why these sounds are characterized in this way a small number of studies have been carried out. ❸ Interestingly, all of these have investigated scraping sounds and within this category the sound of fingernails scraped on a blackboard has been of considerable interest (Halpern, Blake, and Hillenbrand, 1986; Blake, 1986; McDermott and Hauser, 2004; Cox, 2008). ❹ Studies of scraping sounds have shown that the negative reaction to the sound could mainly be found in a band of 2–4 kHz (Halpern, Blake and Hillenbrand, 1986; Kumar et al., 2008). ❺ This differs from very early research suggesting that high frequencies create the unpleasant quality of this and other scraping sounds (Boyd, 1959; Ely, 1975). ❻ Other research has looked beyond frequency, seeking to understand whether there might be some vestigial reasons for the perceived unpleasantness and using data collected from monkeys (Blake, 1986; McDermott and Hauser, 2004). ❼ For instance, Blake (1986) compared scraping sound waves with those of monkey warning cries and found that the waveforms of the two were quite similar. ❽ Because of this similarity, Blake concluded that humans react negatively to scraping noises because they still have some innate reaction

mechanism from their ancient ancestors. ⑧ In other words, humans still have the same response mechanism as monkeys who hear a warning cry.

⑨ McDermott and Hauser in 2004 explored reactions of humans and a type of monkey known as a tamarin to scraping sounds and screeching, respectively. ⑩ They also examined their reactions to some white noise. ⑪ The humans clearly preferred white noise to scraping, while the tamarins reacted to this noise as negatively as they did to screeching.

⑫ In 2008 Cox conducted an experiment of scraping sounds in which participants had both audio and visual inputs. ⑬ The goal was to determine whether the sound and visualizing how it feels to make the sound were in some way related. ⑭ Cox found that the sound of scraping fingernails on a blackboard was perceived as much worse when participants were shown a picture of a hand on a blackboard. ⑮ He concluded that visualizing the making of the sound, a process that is unpleasant, is a significant factor in the perception of unpleasantness.

### Instructor Comments

*I think you have a good start here, but I think you can do more to explain where the current thinking is on the issue.*

- \_\_\_ 1. *You have discussed three studies only. Are there others that you could include?*
- \_\_\_ 2. *The discussion deals with the studies in chronological order. I don't find this to be a particularly useful strategy because you don't make any connections among the studies.*
- \_\_\_ 3. *Overall, I am not sure what your point is. You seem to be discussing the past work only because you know you are supposed to talk about what others have done. But discussing what others have done should not stand in place of making a point. Do you have a point to make?*

4. Recent studies have examined the suitability of various agriculturally derived fuel oils as alternatives to petroleum products. Straight Vegetable Oil (SVO) studies in particular have generated interest because of the potential benefits of SVO as a possible replacement for Diesel #2 in some engines. One common problem is that most SVO has a much higher viscosity than diesel. Discuss the nature of this problem and the current approaches to dealing with it. Is there one approach that looks more promising than the others?
5. Construct a similar task for your own field of study, based on the question you created in Task Twelve. How would you plan to answer it? Be prepared to explain your task and plan in class.

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## TASK FOURTEEN

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Students in an Acoustics course were asked to write a paper on unpleasant sounds, one section of which was required to discuss why certain sounds are considered highly unpleasant. This, of course, required the use of previous studies. Read this first draft of the section and mark the instructor comments on pages 222–223 as reasonable (R) or unreasonable (U). If you are unsure, indicate this with a question mark (?).

1. ① In 1986 Halpern, Blake, and Hillenbrand investigated how people respond to different terrible sounds. ② In one experiment, listeners rated the unpleasantness of different sounds. ③ Participants generally agreed that the worst sound was that of a garden tool scraped on a piece of slate shaped into a roofing tile, which sounds similar to fingernails scraped on a traditional blackboard. ④ The researchers found that the negative reaction to the sound could mainly be found in a band of 2–4 kHz.  
⑤ Also in 1986, Blake did a study of a scraping noise, comparing its sound wave with that of monkey warning cries. ⑥ The waveforms of the two were quite similar. ⑦ Because of this similarity, Blake concluded that humans react negatively to scraping noises because they still have some innate reaction

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## TASK TWELVE

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Think of a topic in which you have some interest and then find an article on that topic. Create a yes-no question that could be answered using the information from the article. If you need some examples, review the yes-no questions in Task One on page 193.

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## Syntheses of More than One Source

Writing tasks that require you to deal with more than one source are common in many graduate courses. They can be assignments on their own, part of a longer paper, or a response to an examination question. Such summaries can be more challenging to write than simple summaries because they require you to analyze and use information from two or more sources that may overlap, slightly differ, or contradict each other. When working with multiple sources, you often need to infer and make explicit the relationships among them. In doing so, you can reveal your understanding of a line of inquiry in your field together with the accepted knowledge and the debates.

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## TASK THIRTEEN

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The following are questions from the fields of Neurobiology, Economics, and Epidemiology. How would you approach each of these tasks? What do you think are the instructor's expectations?

1. What do Alkon and Farley believe the role of serotonin to be in memory? In what ways do they fundamentally differ? How are they similar? Is one perspective more comprehensive than the other?
2. How do Winder & Gori and Agran view the political implications of recent evidence regarding occupational cancers?
3. Relate Kohl and Jaworski's recent article "Market Orientation: The Construct, Research Propositions, and Managerial Implications" to product and service quality. Consider the perspectives of Juran, Feigenbaum, Deming, and Crosby. What common themes emerge, and how do they differ?



use. ⑩ Specifically, suburban TOD dwelling units and offices may be more energy efficient because they are smaller than those in standard suburban spaces. ⑪ TOD dwellings also have shared walls as in the case of townhouses and may consist of multi-family buildings and multi-story offices. ⑫ Because they have fewer exposed surfaces and therefore less exterior heat loss, such structures are typically more energy efficient than individual single-family dwellings or one-story buildings.

Yasufumi Iseki, some editing

1. According to Yasufumi Iseki, TOD is a form of urban planning that can effectively protect the environment.
  2. Iseki maintains that cars and other vehicles create more pollution than any other activity; thus, decreasing the number of vehicles is the most effective way to improve the environment in urban areas. Another way to decrease pollution is to design smaller, more environmentally friendly dwellings. These improvements may be possible by implementing a form of strategic development of public transit known as transit oriented development (TOD).
  3. Iseki states that the number of cars and other vehicles in urban areas needs to be reduced to improve the urban environment. This reduction could be achieved through transit oriented development (TOD).
  4. Iseki claims that urban planning can play a role in improving urban environments by prompting a shift away from heavy vehicle use. Although this will be difficult to achieve because of the overabundance of vehicles in developed countries, it is worth pursuing.
  5. According to Iseki, transit oriented development (TOD) can help solve environmental problems such as urban air pollution by providing city dwellers transportation that is convenient and by encouraging the design of smaller, more energy efficient dwellings.
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## TASK ELEVEN

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Read “Improving the Environment in Urban Areas” and try to determine the text-type. Then read the texts that follow. Decide which you think is most successful at supporting the point that urban planners can have a positive effect on the environment. Write one or two sentences after each text, explaining what you like or dislike. Then discuss each with a partner.

### **Improving the Environment in Urban Areas: The Role of Urban Planners**

❶ Recently, increasingly significant problems regarding urban sprawl, greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, and the loss of open, green areas have become the focus of urban planners. ❷ To address some of these concerns, many countries, especially developed countries, have devised technology to control harmful vehicle emissions. ❸ However, as these countries already have an abundance of vehicles that continues to grow in number, the efficacy of these measures is diminished. ❹ Since cars and other vehicles create more air pollution than any other human activity, the most effective means to reduce pollution is to shift the reliance on automobiles towards other modes of transportation. ❺ One way to achieve this goal is for urban planners to focus on transit oriented development (TOD). ❻ TOD generally refers to higher-density urban development that places pedestrians in the center so that they have easy access to environmentally friendly travel modes such as light rail. ❼ TOD land use strategies, for instance, encourage construction of public transit stations and stops in convenient locations near homes and entertainment that will promote their use. ❽ In addition to a reduction in vehicle use, TOD can have other energy and environmental benefits in terms of housing development and workplace efficiency improvements. ❾ TOD requires less land than does standard development, which can lead to preservation of farmland and green areas as well as lower energy

In fact, if your summary is quite long, you may want to mention the source author's name at different points in your summary—the beginning, the middle, and/or the end. When you mention the author in the middle or end of the summary, be sure to use the surname only.

Reissig et al. go on to describe . . . .

The author further argues that . . . .

Some of the following sentence connectors may be useful in introducing additional information.

*additionally*  
*in addition to*

*also*  
*furthermore*

*further*  
*moreover*

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## TASK TEN

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Look back at the student text in Task Six on pages 208–209. Would you insert a reminder phrase? If so, where? Now read these summary reminder sentences written by our students. Which, if any, of these would you prefer to have written? Try to improve the weaker sentences.

1. Reissig et al. (2009) finally say that we need more research.
2. In addition, the article also discusses the caffeine levels.
3. In Reissig et al.'s (2009) article, they also point out that no one knows the long-term effects of caffeine and the other components.
4. Reissig and colleagues (2009) conclude that current research is insufficient.
5. Reissig and others (2009) conclude about the current risks that exist.

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Sometimes you may want to capture only the main idea(s) of a source. In this case, you might choose some specific information or you may recast the source material so that it is more general than in its original form.

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## TASK NINE

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Here are some citation statements that students wrote in a discussion of the benefits of caffeinated energy drinks using the passage in Task One of this unit. Which, if any, would you prefer to have written? Why? Edit the weaker sentences.

1. Author Chad Reissig and colleagues state that how caffeine content in energy drinks may be hazardous to our health.
  2. "Caffeinated Energy Drinks—A Growing Problem" by Reissig et al. claims that the caffeine and other components in energy drinks consumed may be a health hazard.
  3. According to "Caffeinated Energy Drinks—A Growing Problem," Chad Reissig and colleagues suggest that research is needed to understand the effect of caffeine and other components in energy drinks.
  4. Reissig et al. mention that energy drink consumption is growing rapidly.
  5. Reissig and colleagues said in their article energy drinks might be harmful.
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### Language Focus: Summary Reminder Phrases

In a longer summary, you may want to remind your reader that you are summarizing:

The author goes on to say that . . . .

The article further states that . . . .

[Authors' surnames here] also state/maintain/argue that . . . .

[Authors' surnames here] also believe that . . . .

[Authors' surnames here] conclude that . . . .

In the second half of the paper, [author's surname here] presents . . . .

In formal academic English, many reporting verbs are followed by a *that* clause containing both a subject and a verb. Can you identify the verbs in the table that are not followed by *that*? List them.

*That* clauses have a variety of functions. In the following sentence, the *that* clause is the direct object of the verb *state*.

Benfield and Howard (2000) state that many medical journals are now published in English because of a desire to attract greater readership and to attract better, more international manuscripts.

In spoken English, *that* in clauses that function as direct objects is often omitted, as in the next example. Notice also that in the spoken English alternative, the choice of the verb *said* is less formal.

Benfield and Howard (2000) said a lot of medical journals are published in English now because they want to attract greater readership and to attract better, more international manuscripts.

You may have wondered why we have not said anything about the verb *mention* to refer to your source. If you were to use *mention* instead of one of the other verbs suggested, you would greatly change the importance of the information that follows.

Benfield and Howard (2000) mention that many medical journals are now published in English because of a desire to attract greater readership and to attract better, more international manuscripts.

*Mention* is used for information that was most likely given without detail or support. The example sentence using *mention* makes it seem as if the reason journals are now published in English is a minor point in the article. We suggest that you avoid using *mention* in summaries, unless the point is truly a minor one. A better choice here would be *note*.

A variety of reporting verbs can be used in summary writing to reveal your personal stance toward the source material. Notice how the reporting verbs in the following examples could allow the writer of the summary to convey his or her attitude.

Campbell (2010) *presumes* that the findings will be representative of the whole population. . . .

The authors *speculate* that people who scrap their old cars will immediately buy another, new(er) car.

Notice also how the addition of an adverb (in mid-position, of course) can even more clearly reveal your stance, which you may want to do when writing to critique.

The authors *incorrectly assume* that patients will always take the medicine that has been prescribed.

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## TASK EIGHT

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Some reporting verbs are less objective than others. Can you identify which verbs in the table seem to be objective and which verbs have the potential to be evaluative? The first one has been done for you.

	Objective	Evaluative
describe	X	
recommend		
claim		
assume		
contend		
propose		
theorize		
support		
examine		

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TABLE 15. High-Frequency Reporting Verbs

Discipline	Verbs and Frequency					
	Rank					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Harder Sciences</b>						
Biology	describe	find	report	show	suggest	observe
Physics	develop	report	study	find	expand	
Electrical Engineering	propose	use	describe	show	publish	develop
Mechanical Engineering	describe	show	report	discuss	give	develop
Epidemiology	find	describe	suggest	report	examine	show
Nursing	find	suggest	report	identify	indicate	show
Medicine	show	report	demonstrate	observe	find	suggest
<b>Softer Sciences</b>						
Marketing	suggest	argue	find	demonstrate	propose	show
Applied linguistics	suggest	argue	show	explain	find	point out
Psychology	find	show	suggest	report	demonstrate	focus
Sociology	argue	suggest	describe	note	analyze	discuss
Education	find	suggest	note	report	demonstrate	provide
Philosophy	say	suggest	argue	claim	point out	think

Data for Biology, Physics, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Applied Linguistics, and Sociology from Hyland, K. Academic attribution: Citation and the construction of disciplinary knowledge, *Applied Linguistics* 20 (1999): 341–367. Other data thanks to Carson Maynard.

## TASK SEVEN

If you have not done so already, find at least five, but preferably more, well-written published research papers that are typical of papers in your area of study. It does not matter whether these are seminal papers or where the research was conducted. We simply want you to have a small data set (a corpus) that you can analyze to gain some insights into the important characteristics of published work in your discipline. Choose 2 to 5 papers from your collection (or more) and underline all the reporting verbs. If your field is represented in Table 15, do your results match with those in the table? If your field is not represented, is there one field that is close to yours in its use of reporting verbs?

field of study. The APA and MLA systems refer to a source similarly, by author and date. The following citations are in APA style.

Reissig et al. (2009) questioned whether energy drinks are safe.

The safety of energy drinks has not yet been established (Reissig et al., 2009).

In their study of energy drinks, Reissig et al. (2009) suggested that energy drinks may not be entirely safe. They also indicated that more research is needed.

How does the citation in the second sentence differ from those in the other two sentences?

For a thorough discussion of APA and MLA styles, see *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. In Engineering and some other fields, it may be more common to use reference numbers.

Photorefractive crystals may be useful in the development of high-speed electrical signals.<sup>1</sup>

Always check the style guides in your discipline to learn more about proper documentation. Members of a field expect writers to be familiar with their disciplinary practices.

There is a range of reporting verbs that you may use when referring to your source material. In fact, a study by Ken Hyland (1999) identified more than 400 different reporting verbs; however, nearly 50 percent of these were used only one time in his corpus of 80 research articles. A much smaller number of verbs tend to predominate. In Table 15 we show the most frequently used reporting verbs from a variety of disciplines, with the most frequent on the left and the sixth most frequent on the far right. As you can see, there are some disciplinary differences.





## Language Focus: Identifying the Source

Most summaries will have a sentence near the beginning that contains two elements: the source and a main idea. Notice the use of the present tense in many of the examples.

According to Fairchild (2011), \_\_\_\_\_.  
(main idea)

Ho and Neidell's 2009 paper on fluoridation discusses \_\_\_\_\_.  
(main idea)

Bernstein (2004) states that \_\_\_\_\_.  
claims (main idea)  
argues  
maintains

Barinaga (2004) suggests that \_\_\_\_\_.  
asserts (main idea)  
hypothesizes  
states  
concludes

Lamport [1] proposed \_\_\_\_\_.  
demonstrated  
found  
identified

\_\_\_\_\_ was first reported in [13].  
proposed  
identified  
given

You may cite your source material following APA (American Psychological Association), MLA (Modern Language Association), IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), or another style, depending on your

This is obviously a first attempt because a reader unfamiliar with the source will reasonably assume that Mark is the family name and may then look in the reference list to find the article. Mark happens to be the first name of the first author of the car safety article and the in-text citation would be confusing. Also, since there is more than one author in our example, this needs to be acknowledged. We propose the following revision.

According to Mulder et al. (2011), car safety research should be directed at preventing accidents.

Generally, family names alone are sufficient, but occasionally, you may see citations that include both first and last names of a single author. One reason to do this is to distinguish two authors with the same family name. Another reason has to do with requirements of certain styles such as MLA that may prescribe the use of an author's full name the first time that author is cited. Finally, another reason, for which we can offer only anecdotal evidence, is to acknowledge an author's status in the field. Well-known figures in certain fields are frequently referred to by both first and last names. Take, for example, these sentences.

#### *Physics*

These relations arise from the energy conservation consideration originally proposed by Albert Einstein.

#### *Economics*

According to John Maynard Keynes, "There is, clearly, no absolute standard of 'liquidity.'"

#### *Anthropology*

Other possible models include those of the Kibbutz as explained by Bettelheim (1969) and Kaffman (1972) or the Samoan Village as described by Margaret Mead (1961).

⑥ While previous safety measures were targeted at protection and have been highly successful, it seems now that driver distraction needs to be addressed if the gains in safety are to be maintained or enhanced. ⑦ Thus, there is a need to shift the focus of safety research to help drivers themselves be more aware of their surroundings during the operation of their vehicles. ⑧ For instance, drivers may not be aware that they are following a car too closely and be unable to stop safely. ⑨ If a car-following alert system (Mulder et al., 2011) could be devised to warn drivers of the potential danger, accidents could be prevented.

1. Does the response answer the question?
  2. Does the response capture good supportive information from the source? Does the source information serve as support or does it seem to be the focus?
  3. To what extent has the author of the draft used his/her own words?
  4. How well has the draft author revealed his/her understanding of the problem and solution?
  5. Can you identify any instances of evaluation and where the author has incorporated some ideas not found in the source? Are these appropriate?
  6. If you were to revise the draft, what would you do?
  7. Write your own response to the question using the source text.
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Since many of the summaries you write will be woven into your own original text, it is very important to identify at least the source author, depending on your field of study.

Note that when your citation style requires the use of author names, you need to provide the family name. First names only are not used in in-text citations since this makes it difficult for your reader to know to whom you might be referring. One of our students chose to identify the source of the vehicle safety text in this way.

According to Mark and his co-authors, car safety research should be directed at preventing accidents.

To sum up, when you write a formal summary of someone else's ideas, you should keep in mind the following guidelines.

1. Always try to use your own words.
2. Include enough support and detail so that your message is clear.
3. Do not try to paraphrase specialized vocabulary or technical terms.
4. Make sure the summary reads smoothly. Focus on old-to-new information flow; use transition devices where necessary; and provide supporting detail. You do not want a collection of sentences that does not flow.
5. If it is impossible to use your own words, then quote the material. Remember, however, that too much quoting will not likely result in a successful paper. Information from sources should *support*, but not *replace*, your own ideas, interpretations, and explanations.

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## TASK SIX

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Here is a second draft of the response to whether there is a need for a shift in the focus of research on car safety systems. Read it and answer the questions on page 209.

① Over the past five decades there has been a dramatic improvement in the risks associated with driving. ② During this time, deaths resulting from driving accidents have decreased nearly fourfold (Mulder et al., 2011). ③ Much of this improvement has to do with appropriate safety regulations and equipment in vehicles designed to protect drivers and their passengers (e.g., safety belts, air bags, and other passive safety mechanisms) (Mulder et al., 2011). ④ This improvement, however, may begin to diminish as drivers face new risks related to the availability of technology that is not needed for vehicle operation, but does reduce drivers' attention to their task. ⑤ This, of course, includes a variety of devices such as music systems, mobile phones, and even GPS, all of which, but particularly mobile phones, have been shown to have an impact on safe driving.

We even found many instances of useful modification and split infinitives.

The system	is designed	to fully	support
	is configured	to directly	
	is built	to unobtrusively	
	is intended	to optionally	
	is expected		
	is developed		
	is able		
	is placed		

So, we can write something like this.

The system is configured to provide ongoing car-following support in many types of situations, not only those that are identified as dangerous.

Note that the language has been substantially changed, although the sense of the original is fully maintained. A paraphrase approach to summarizing can be somewhat successful, but if you do this sentence by sentence for a longer stretch of text, you run the risk of not demonstrating your full understanding of the passage. You might miss an opportunity to highlight key points. Another possible danger is that the resulting summary may not be original enough and could be considered plagiarism by some.

If you (understandably) feel that your paraphrasing ability is not strong, you can copy some material and place it in quotation marks; however, a better but more difficult strategy would be to carefully consider the elements you have identified as important, put the original away, and write what you have understood. This may allow you to condense the ideas in the source even further.

## Careful Use of Synonyms

When using synonyms, you need to be careful about your choices. Not all synonyms work equally well in all contexts. Take this example, for instance.

The system is intended to provide continuous car-following support within a wide range of car-following situations—not only in critical situations.

If you follow a simple synonym substitution process, you may produce something like this.

In many kinds of car-following situations—not only in grave situations—the system is planned to present persistent car-following support.

The rearrangement of the ideas is good and is an important strategy for paraphrasing. However, *grave* and *critical* are not quite similar enough in this context. Perhaps *dangerous* would be a better choice here. In addition, *present persistent car-following support* does not work so well because the collocation (simply put, words that tend to go together) is awkward. *Offer* might be a better choice.

If you need to check whether the words you want to use go together, you can search the internet, ideally Google Scholar. To conduct your search, place the expression of interest in quotation marks and, if you think it would be helpful, use a wild card indicated by an asterisk (\*) in the expression so that you can capture variations of the expression. For instance, we did this search on Google Scholar. To narrow hits to your field of study, include a relevant term outside the quotation marks.

"the system is \* to \* support"

We found these interesting possibilities.

The system	is designed	to provide	support
	is configured	to deliver	
	is built		
	is intended		
	is expected		
	is developed		
	is able		
	is placed		

3. Write two paraphrases of this short text. Before writing, break the task into important points, relationships, linking phrases and connectors, and synonyms.

Passive safety systems help lessen the impact of driving accidents. They do nothing to contribute to preventing drivers from getting into an accident.

**Important points**

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**Relationship between the points**

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**Linking phrases or expressions to connect the points**

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**Possible synonyms**

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**Paraphrase 1**

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**Paraphrase 2**

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As the task suggests, paraphrasing is hard work, particularly when it comes to vocabulary.

**Other considerations**

- Is this always true? Should the claim be softened?

Finally, you are ready to try your own paraphrase.

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**TASK FIVE**

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Re-write the excerpt at the bottom of page 202 using *because* and *lead to*, changing the vocabulary and grammar as necessary. Here are two examples using *due to*.

**Example: *due to***

Safe driving practices may be compromised *due to* the presence of technology in cars that is not directly related to vehicle operation including cell phones, music players, and GPS.

Drivers today may fail to concentrate on the road and other drivers *due to* the presence of technology such as cell phones, music players, GPS, and other technology that is unrelated to driving.

**1. Use *because***

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**2. Use *lead to***

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If you want to use this information but write it in your own words, you could begin by identifying the important information in the sentence and the relationships between points. You then might think about language to establish relationships, as demonstrated here.

**Important points**

- There are a lot of devices in cars that have nothing to do with operating a vehicle.
- These devices can distract drivers.
- Drivers are so distracted that they may not pay attention to the road and other drivers.

**Important relationships**

- cause and effect

**Linking phrases and expressions** that can connect the two points

- *because*
- *therefore*
- *as a result*

**Verbs that might establish other relationships**

- *is due to*
- *caused by*
- *can be attributed to*
- *leading to*

Next you might consider possible synonyms for the source vocabulary and changing the part of speech (nouns to verbs, for instance).

- *such as* → *like, including*
- *more recently* → *lately?*
- *devices* → *technology*
- *divert* → *distract, sidetrack, take away, diversion*
- *non-driving* → ?
- *primary sources* → *main inputs?*
- *necessary* → *needed, required*
- *safe* → *secure?*

⑧ Rather than focusing on protecting drivers in an accident, research should be directed more towards systems that actively support drivers in their driving task so that they do not get into accidents in the first place. ⑨ This is a radical change from the focus on passive safety systems, which do nothing to help prevent drivers from getting into an accident (Mulder et al., 2011).

This is perhaps a reasonable beginning. The writer has retained the important parts of the text. However, this summary has some weaknesses.

1. For the most part, too much of the text is written in the words of the original, although no whole sections were borrowed. It may very well be an example of plagiarism—work copied from a source without proper attribution. Notice, for instance, that much of Sentence 1 is very close to the beginning of the source and throughout several stretches of language from the source have been copied.
2. The draft does not display a high level of understanding of the source passage. While it does show that the writer can pull out important information, it may not convince the reader that the summary writer understands the issues and need for research.

Overall, although this response is a reasonable draft, it needs more work before it would be fully acceptable as a written assignment. Now, let us consider how the summary could be improved. One obvious approach would be to paraphrase the sentences of the original.

## Paraphrasing

A paraphrase is a restatement (in your own words) of the ideas in the original. Good paraphrasing can demonstrate that you have understood the text you have read and can avoid plagiarizing. The most common strategy used to accomplish this involves replacing words in the source with synonyms and perhaps changing the grammar. Look again at Sentence 3 from the text on new car safety systems.

... nondriving-related devices, such as car stereos, mobile phones, and, more recently, navigation systems, divert drivers' attention increasingly more away from the primary sources of information necessary for safe operation of the vehicle: the road and other road users.

In answering the questions, you may have extracted this information, which you could then use to discuss whether there is a need to change the focus of vehicle safety research.

- The number of accidents and the severity of injuries have decreased because of better safety.
- Drivers these days have a lot of technology that is accessible, but not necessarily needed, to operate a vehicle.
- Technology distracts drivers.
- Distraction is a major cause of accidents.
- There is an interest in preventing accidents and not just in protecting drivers.
- Accidents can be prevented if driver support systems are developed and installed.

In the next step, these elements can be strung together to form the basis of a response to the question. Of course, special care has to be taken to ensure a logical flow of ideas. Here is a draft written by one of our students in response to the question posed in Task Four.

① Since the 1960s the motor vehicle fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles has gone down from 5.1 to 1.4. ② This improvement is the result of improvements in driver safety regulations, higher driver training standards, better road design, and advancements in car-safety systems. ③ Important advances in car safety include seatbelts, anticrash bodies, airbags, and side impact protection systems (Mulder et al., 2011). ④ All of these are systems that have no influence on a driving situation until an accident occurs. ⑤ Because they are idle until needed they are known as passive safety systems.

⑥ Passive systems are important, but may not be enough to protect today's drivers, whose vehicles now contain nondriving-related devices, such as car stereos, mobile phones, and, more recently, navigation systems, that can divert their attention increasingly more away from the primary sources of information necessary for safe operation of the vehicle: the road and other road users (Mulder et al., 2011). ⑦ Thus, to continue the improvement in driving safety, there is a need for a shift in the focus of research on car safety systems that take into account driver distraction.

directed more towards systems that actively support drivers in their driving task. ⑥ Ultimately, active support systems aim to prevent drivers from getting into accidents. ⑦ This is a radically different approach compared with that of passive safety systems, which help lessen the impact of driving accidents but do nothing to contribute to preventing drivers from getting into an accident.

⑧ The goal of this paper is to present the design of an active haptic\* support system for car-following. ⑨ The intended application range of the proposed system is limited to speeds of approximately 80 km/h and higher (minimum highway speeds). ⑩ The system is intended to provide continuous car-following support within a wide range of car-following situations—not only in critical situations. ⑪ The intensity of the support is, therefore, continuously adapted to the car-following situation.

If you recall, we said that it is important to read and take notes on the text that you will summarize. To inform your understanding and guide your choice of important information from the text, you could use these questions.

Questions	Answer
What is the issue or problem addressed in the publication?	
Why is this important?	
What was done to address or solve it?	
How does the solution or treatment work?	
Who did it?	
What about the research is different/innovative/advantageous?	

Note that the questions are simply a starting point. You can devise your own questions when you summarize parts of papers from your own field.

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\*having to do with the sense of touch.

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## TASK FOUR

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Students in one of our writing courses were given a section of a research paper on a driver support system and asked to respond to this question: Is there a need for a shift in the focus of research on car safety systems? With this question in mind, read the passage, and then underline the information that you would include in your response. Can you tell how the text is organized?

### **Design of a Haptic Gas Pedal for Active Car-Following Support**

Mulder, M., Abbink, D. A.,  
van Paassen, M. M., and Mulder, M. (2011).

*IEEE Transactions on Intelligent Transportation Systems*, 12, 268–279.

❶ The fact that the motor vehicle fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles has gone down from 5.1 to 1.4 [2] since the 1960s is most certainly the result of improved driver safety regulations, higher driver training standards, better road design, and advancements in car-safety systems. ❷ From the early seatbelts and anti-crash bodies to airbags and side impact protection systems, car manufacturers have come up with a broad range of passive safety improvements that significantly reduce the severity of driver, passenger, and pedestrian or cyclist injury when involved in a traffic accident.

❸ However, with the increased importance of the car as a personal means of transportation, nondriving-related devices, such as car stereos, mobile phones, and, more recently, navigation systems, divert drivers' attention increasingly more away from the primary sources of information necessary for safe operation of the vehicle: the road and other road users. ❹ With traffic accident statistics attributing driver inattention as one of the major causes of traffic accidents [3–5], this increase of in-vehicle devices is worrisome at least—if not dangerous.

❺ To bridge the gap between the gain in improved passive safety and the increasing development and use of nondriving-related in-vehicle devices, research on car safety systems is

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## TASK THREE

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Here are some approaches to writing, beginning with a plagiarizing approach and ending with an acceptable quoting technique. Where does plagiarism stop? Draw a line between the last approach that would be considered plagiarism and the first approach that would produce acceptable original work.

1. Copying a paragraph as it is from the source without any acknowledgment.
  2. Copying a paragraph making only small changes, such as replacing a few verbs or adjectives with synonyms.
  3. Cutting and pasting a paragraph by using the sentences of the original but leaving one or two out, or by putting one or two sentences in a different order.
  4. Composing a paragraph by taking short standard phrases from a number of sources and putting them together with some words of your own.
  5. Paraphrasing a paragraph by rewriting with substantial changes in language and organization, amount of detail, and examples.
  6. Quoting a paragraph by placing it in block format with the source cited.
- 

University plagiarism policies are readily available on the internet. We recommend that you find and read through the plagiarism policy of your institution and become familiar with it, even if you do not agree with all of it.

Let's now look more closely at the summary writing process by working with a text from Mechanical Engineering.

In this text, we believe there is language in Sentence 1 that you can borrow.

- ① The increasing popularity of \_\_\_\_\_ is attributed to \_\_\_\_\_.

So, you might write this new sentence for a completely different topic.

- ① The increasing popularity of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) can be attributed to its low cost.

In Sentence 4, we think it would be fine to use this language. Can you complete the sentence using information from your field? We offer an example to get you started.

- ④ The incorporation of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ has been facilitated by \_\_\_\_\_.

The incorporation of corpus data in academic writing courses has been facilitated by the availability of large corpora on the internet.

It would not, however, be acceptable to take the original sentences in their entirety and use them in your own text—unless you placed quotation marks around them. Copying sentences without quotation marks amounts to passing off someone else's work as your own.

You should also be aware that you should not borrow "famous" phrases without at least putting them in quotation marks. Here, for example is a famous quotation by Louis Pasteur, which was originally in French.

Chance favors the prepared mind.

If you wanted to use this phrase, you should recognize its special status. We would encourage you to borrow standard phraseology of your field and skeletal phrases when appropriate, but not special expressions such as the Pasteur quote (unless these are placed in quotation marks).

## Some Notes on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is best defined as a deliberate activity—the conscious copying from the work of others. The concept of plagiarism has become an integral part of North American and Western European countries. It is based on a number of assumptions that may not hold true in all cultures. One is a rather romantic assumption that the writer is an original, individual, creative artist. Another is that original ideas and expressions are the acknowledged property of their creators (as is the case with a patent for an invention). Yet another is that it is a sign of disrespect—rather than respect—to copy without acknowledgment from the works of published authorities. This even includes the use of images and figures that you have downloaded from the internet, but for which you give no source.

Of course, borrowing the words and phrases of others can be a useful language learning strategy. Certainly you would not be plagiarizing if you borrowed items that are frequently used in academic English (skeletal phrases) or that are common knowledge, such as these examples.

Paris is the capital of France.

An increase in demand often leads to an increase in price.

The results from this experiment seem to suggest that . . .

These results are statistically significant.

Indeed, if you can never use standard phraseology and expressions of your field or academia in general, it would be difficult to improve your writing. The key is knowing the difference between language used by most writers to present their own perspectives and new ideas and language that expresses someone else's unique content and ideas. For instance, let's look at a text that we provided in Unit Two.

① The increasing popularity of electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) is attributed to the savings in fuel costs compared to conventional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. ② EVs and PHEVs save energy due to the employment of reverse regenerating braking during the deceleration cycle. ③ This energy is typically stored in batteries and ultracapacitors (UCs). ④ The incorporation of on-board energy storage systems (ESS) and generation in PHEVs has been facilitated and dictated by the market demands for enhanced performance and range.



(47%). These drinks vary widely in both caffeine content (ranging from 50 to 505 mg per can or bottle) and caffeine concentration (ranging from 2.5 to 171 mg per fluid ounce). Since the long-term effects of these high levels of caffeine are not known, there is a chance that consumption of these drinks may be harmful.

3. In 2002, sales of energy drinks in the United States were just over \$100 million. By 2006, however, this figure was \$700 million. Although this tremendous growth is welcome news for producers and retailers, it is unclear what the long-term health consequences may be (Reissig et al., 2009). This uncertainty may even encourage higher levels of consumption, leading to possible health issues.
4. Hundreds of new energy drink brands have been introduced into the market over the past decade (Johnson, 2006). Along with this growth, sales have also dramatically increased, reaching a market value of billions of dollars in the U.S. alone. Clearly, the demand for caffeine, which varies widely in these drinks, is insatiable and a public health crisis is about to emerge.
5. Energy drink consumption is rapidly growing, which is a source of concern among health professionals (Reissig et al., 2009). Specifically, researchers do not know what the long- and short-terms effects of caffeine and other additives in these drinks may be (Reissig, 2009). Thus, we may soon be facing a public health crisis.

Now use information from the Reissig et al. text to respond to the question of whether energy drinks pose a public health problem.

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At this point, we want to draw your attention to an issue that has been receiving increasing attention within and outside academia, specifically using your own words when you borrow information from the work of others as you write your papers.

This citation suggests that you have read the report yourself, which would be misleading.

Research by Packaged Facts (2007) has shown . . .

To indicate that you are citing a citation, this would be appropriate.

Research conducted by Packaged Facts (as cited in Reissig et al., 2009) has shown that . . .

Note that this citation clearly attributes the data to Packaged Facts and not to Reissig et al.

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## TASK TWO

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Which of these five texts seems best as a general background paragraph for a paper arguing that energy drinks are a potential public health problem? Explain your choice.

1. In the U.S., 200 new energy drink brands were launched in the 12-month period ending July 2007 (Packaged Facts, 2007). From 2002 to 2006, the average annual growth rate in energy drink sales was 55% (Packaged Facts, 2007) (Fig. 1). In 2006, the total U.S. retail market value for energy drinks (from all sources) was approximately \$5.4 billion and has shown a similar annual growth rate over this same period (47%) (Packaged Facts, 2007). These drinks vary widely in both caffeine content (ranging from 50 to 505 mg per can or bottle) and caffeine concentration (ranging from 2.5 to 171 mg per fluid ounce).
2. According to Packaged Facts (as cited in Reissig et al., 2009), between 2006 and 2007 hundreds of energy drink brands were introduced into the U.S. market. This was likely a result of producers recognizing energy drinks as a very profitable product with growth potential. In fact, the average annual growth rate in energy drink sales was 55% (Packaged Facts, 2007) (Fig. 1). Research by Packaged Facts (as cited in Reissig et al., 2009) shows that the total U.S. retail market value for energy drinks (from all sources) was estimated to be \$5.4 billion in 2006 and has shown a similar annual growth rate over this same period

Here are two other possible writing scenarios that are very different from the original task.

1. You are working on a course project focused on product development for a beverage company, and you have been asked to propose ideas for a new beverage. You think that the company should create an energy drink. Would you choose the same information as you did at the beginning of the task (see page 190)?
2. You have been asked to write a recommendation about including energy drinks in campus vending machines. Would your selections from the source text change?

Underlying the three hypothetical scenarios in Task One are yes-no questions that can be answered using information from the text. For instance, in the case of public health, the question is broadly, "Are energy drinks a possible public health problem?" If your answer is yes, you will choose information consistent with that perspective. Note that by considering an underlying yes or no question, you need to take a stance. What might be the yes-no questions underlying the other two scenarios? What is your stance?

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In this next task we would like you to take a look at some attempts at using the energy drink text to support the claim that energy drink use may be a growing health concern. But first, we need to make a few comments. Whenever possible, you should directly cite original sources, rather than cite a citation (indirect citation). If you wanted to use the information on the number of energy drinks introduced to the market, you should find and read the Johnson (2006) paper. As a scholar, it is better to check the original source to make sure that the information you saw elsewhere is accurate. If the source is not accessible but you want to use information from it, then you need to make it clear that this is what you have done by citing both sources. The data in the report prepared by Packaged Facts, a market research company, is not easily accessed and so it would be reasonable to use the cited information from it.

Table 1. Caffeine in Energy Drinks (United States)

	Ounces per Bottle or Can	Caffeine Concentration (mg/oz)	Total Caffeine (mg)
Top selling energy drinks*			
Red Bull	8.3	9.6	80.0
Monster	16.0	10.0	160.0
Rockstar	16.0	10.0	160.0
Amp	8.4	8.9	75.0
Tab Energy	10.5	9.1	95.0
Higher caffeine energy drinks**			
Wired X505	24.0	21.0	505.0
Fixx	20.0	25.0	500.0
BookKoo Energy	24.0	15.0	360.0
SPIKE Shooter	8.4	35.7	300.0
Cocaine Energy Drink	8.4	33.3	280.0
Lower caffeine energy drinks**			
Bomba Energy	8.4	8.9	75.0
HiBall Energy	10.0	7.5	75.0
Vitamin Water (Energy Citrus)	20.0	2.5	50.0
High concentration energy drinks**			
RedLine Power Rush	2.5	140.0	350.0
Ammo	1.0	171.0	171.0
Powershot	1.0	100.0	100.0
Fuel Cell	2.0	90.0	180.0
Classic soft drinks			
Coca-Cola Classic	12.0	2.9	34.5
Pepsi Cola	12.0	3.2	38.0
Dr Pepper	12.0	3.4	41.0
Mountain Dew	12.0	4.5	54.0

\* Top selling energy drinks in the U.S. 2006, listed sequentially as a percentage of market share (based on data from Packaged Facts, 2007).

\*\* Examples of energy drinks drawn from the hundreds of energy drink products currently marketed in the U.S., listed sequentially on total caffeine content.

Data on drink volume and caffeine content were obtained from the manufacturer via product label, website, or personal communication with manufacturer representatives. The one exception was that the caffeine content for BookKoo Energy was obtained from the energyfiend website (Energyfiend website, 2008).

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(Johnson, 2006), and 200 new brands launched in the U.S. in the 12-month period ending July 2007 (Packaged Facts, 2007). ④ From 2002 to 2006, the average annual growth rate in energy drink sales was 55% (Packaged Facts, 2007) (Fig. 1). ⑤ The total U.S. retail market value for energy drinks (from all sources) was estimated to be \$5.4 billion in 2006 and has shown a similar annual growth rate over this same period (47%) (Packaged Facts, 2007). ⑥ These drinks vary widely in both caffeine content (ranging from 50 to 505 mg per can or bottle) and caffeine concentration (ranging from 2.5 to 171 mg per fluid ounce) (Table 1). ⑦ For comparison, the caffeine content of a 6 oz cup of brewed coffee varies from 77 to 150 mg (Griffiths et al., 2003). ⑧ The main active ingredient in energy drinks is caffeine, although other substances such as taurine, riboflavin, pyridoxine, nicotinamide, other B vitamins, and various herbal derivatives are also present (Aranda and Morlock, 2006). ⑨ The acute and long-term effects resulting from excessive and chronic consumption of these additives alone and in combination with caffeine are not fully known. ⑩ Although the full impact of the rise in popularity of energy drinks has yet to be realized, the potential for adverse health consequences should be considered and may be cause for preemptive regulatory action.

Figure 1. Energy Drink Sales in the U.S. 2002–2006

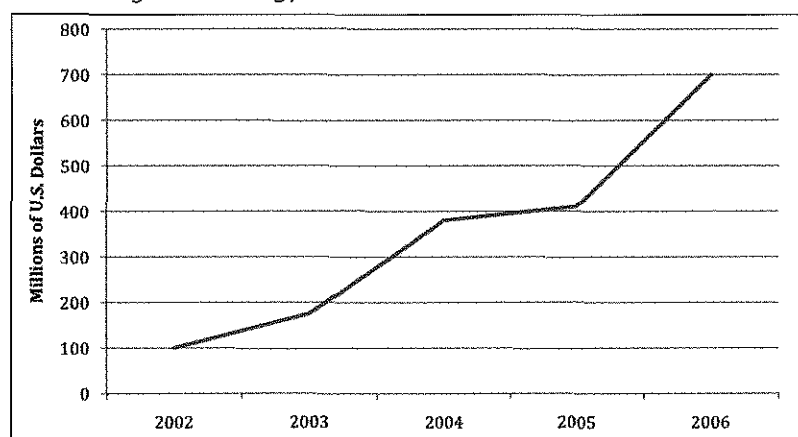


Fig. 1. Data are based on scanner data from over 32,000 stores such as supermarkets, drug stores, and discount merchandisers other than Wal-Mart. Data are from retailers with \$2 million or more in annual sales but exclude: clubstores/warehouse clubs, convenience stores, dollar/variety stores, food service, vending, concession sales and specialty channels/retailers of all types (e.g., gourmet/specialty food stores, hardware/home improvements stores, military exchanges). (Based on data from Packaged Facts, 2007.)

3. Read the text, highlighting important information or taking notes.
4. In your own words, list the points of each relevant section. Try to write a one-sentence summary of each.
5. List the key support points for the main topic, and include minor details if necessary.
6. Make sure your notes reflect the strength of the claims or conclusions.
7. Write your reactions or thoughts about the sections you have identified as important. (Keep in mind that information from sources should support, but not become or be offered instead of, your own interpretation and explanation.)
8. Go through the process again. Read the text several times if necessary, making changes to your notes as appropriate.

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## TASK ONE

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Let's say you have been asked to write a paper in Public Health that examines the consumption of energy drinks such as Red Bull, Lipovitan-D, and Cobra. You come across this article and want to use it to support your claim that these drinks are potentially harmful and should be closely regulated. Underline the information you might borrow to support your perspective. Be prepared to discuss your choices.

### **Caffeinated Energy Drinks—A Growing Problem**

Reissig, C. J., Strain, E. C., and Griffiths, R. R. (2009).

*Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 99, 1–10.

- ① In 2006, annual worldwide energy drink consumption increased 17% from the previous year to 906 million gallons, with Thailand leading the world in energy drink consumption per person, but the U.S. leading the world in total volume sales (Zenith International, 2007). ② Although “energy drinks” first appeared in Europe and Asia in the 1960s, the introduction of “Red Bull” in Austria in 1987 and in the U.S. in 1997 sparked the more recent trend toward aggressive marketing of high caffeine content “energy drinks.” ③ Since its inception, the energy drink market has grown exponentially, with nearly 500 new brands launched worldwide in 2006

summarizing relevant portions of this text, you can support your view as to whether reality TV programs are similar to or different from traditional documentaries.

## Considerations before Writing a Summary

It is not likely that you will be assigned to produce a simple summary of a published paper or book unless you are writing an annotated bibliography. Instead, it is more likely that you will need to write a summary as part of some other writing task. These summaries can be extremely challenging to write. A good summary has three principal requirements.

1. It should be focused on the aspects of the source text or texts that are relevant for your purpose.
2. It should represent the source material in an accurate fashion.
3. It should condense the source material and be presented in your own words. Summaries that consist of directly copied portions of the original rarely succeed. Such a summary may suggest that you can find potentially important information but will likely fail to reveal the extent to which you have understood it. In addition, you may be plagiarizing (see pages 196–197).

Notice that we have not said anything about the length of a summary, which will often be determined by your purpose. Sometimes instructors will ask for a one-page summary of an article (or maybe a two-page summary of a book) as part of a critique assignment. They may also ask for a paragraph-length abstract (see Unit Eight) or even a mini-summary of one to two sentences (as is typical of annotated bibliographies). Regardless of the type of text, to do a good job, you must first thoroughly understand the source material you are working with. So, here are some preliminary steps in writing a summary.

1. Skim the text, noticing and noting the subheadings. If there are no subheadings, try to divide the text into sections.
2. If you have been assigned the text, consider why. Determine what type of text you are dealing with—that is, the genre of the source text (e.g., a research paper) or perhaps the organization (problem-solution or general-specific). This can help you identify important information and focus your reading strategies.

## Unit Five

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# Writing Summaries

Of all the writing tasks we have discussed so far, summary writing may well be the one you are most familiar with. We make summaries of many different things, including meetings, lectures, and readings. Our summaries may be quite elaborate, or they may only involve one or two key phrases, depending on our purpose for writing them. These summaries of what others have written or said may be for our own personal use. Most often we use this material for future reference. In an academic setting especially, summaries can form an essential part of our preparation for an exam, a class discussion, a research paper, a thesis, or a dissertation. In these situations, we are free to concentrate on what we think is important or interesting about the source.

In the first half of this textbook, you could successfully complete most of the writing tasks by relying either on information that you already possessed or on a small amount of information from a source. In the second half, we will pay more attention to writing that heavily relies on the use of sources. Unit Five deals with summary writing. Unit Six expands our discussion of summary writing to the writing of critiques of or critical responses to source material, including book reviews. Finally, in the last two units, we move on to writing sections of an entire research paper.

Summary writing may be part of a more public communication (such as a published research article) and an integral part of other work that you may do. For example, your advisor may ask you to summarize some recent literature that could be useful for your research group. Instructors may ask you to write a literature review or critique articles. You may need to write a major research paper at key points in your degree program or write a proposal. At the very least you will need to summarize some published work to support claims in your papers and to build a foundation for your research. In each of these cases, you use the work of others to add credibility to your claims and you have an opportunity to “display” your understanding of the work in your field. Look back at the reality television text that starts on page 56. By