

**Guidelines for writing a SUMMARY with IN-TEXT CITATIONS**

The purpose of a summary is to give the reader, in a about 1/4 of the original length of an article/lecture, a clear, objective picture of the original lecture or text. Most importantly, **the summary restates only the main points of a text or a lecture without giving examples or details**, such as dates, numbers or statistics.

Skills practiced: **note-taking, paraphrasing** (using your own words and sentence structure), condensing

**Examples of acceptable paraphrases and unacceptable paraphrases (= plagiarism):** [Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It](#)

**Before writing the summary:**

1. For a text, **read, mark, and annotate** the original. (For a lecture, work with the notes you took.)
  - o highlight the topic sentence
  - o highlight key points/key words/phrases
  - o highlight the concluding sentence
  - o outline each paragraph in the margin
  
2. Take notes on the following:
  - o the source (author--first/last name, title, date of publication, volume number, place of publication, publisher, URL, etc.)
  - o the main idea of the original (paraphrased)
  - o the major supporting points (in outline form)
  - o major supporting explanations (e.g. reasons/causes or effects)

**Writing your summary--Steps:**

1. Organize your notes into an outline which includes main ideas and supporting points **but no examples or details** (dates, numbers, statistics).
2. Write an introductory paragraph that begins with **a frame**, including an **in-text citation of the source** and the author as well as a **reporting verb** to introduce the main idea.
  - ARTICLE:

In his/her article (or lecture) " \_\_\_\_\_," \_\_\_\_\_ (year)  
 (title, first letter capitalized) (author/lecturer's last name)

**argues/claims/reports/contends/maintains/states** that \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (main idea/argument; S + V + C)

**Example:** In his article "Michael Dell turns the PC world inside out," Andrew E. Serwer (1997) describes how Michael Dell founded Dell Computers and claims that Dell's low-cost, direct-sales strategy and high quality standards account for Dell's enormous success.

- BOOK:

In his book *The Pearl*, John Steinbeck (1945) illustrates the fight between good and evil in humankind.

- INTERVIEW:

In my interview with him/her (date), \_\_\_\_\_(first name, last name) stated that ....

**Reporting Verbs:**

STRONG ARGUMENT    NEUTRAL    COUNTERARGUMENT    SUGGESTION    CRITICISM

argue	state	refute the claim	suggest	criticize
claim	report	argue against	recommend	
contend	explain			
maintain	discuss			

insist	illustrate			
	posit			

**Other examples of frames:**

- According to \_\_\_\_\_ (year), \_\_\_\_\_.  
(author's last name) (main idea; S + V + C)
- \_\_\_\_\_'s article on \_\_\_\_\_ (year) discusses the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(author's last name) (topic) (main idea; Noun Phrase)
- \_\_\_\_\_, in his/her article, " \_\_\_\_\_ " argues that \_\_\_\_\_.  
(author's last name, year) (title of article) (main idea; S + V + C)

3. The main idea or argument needs to be included in this first sentence. Then mention the **major** aspects/factors/reasons that are discussed in the article/lecture. Give a full reference for this citation at the end of the summary (see #6. below).
  - a. For a **one-paragraph summary**, discuss each supporting point in a separate sentence. Give 1-2 explanations for each supporting point, summarizing the information from the original.
  - b. For a **multi-paragraph summary**, discuss each supporting point in a separate paragraph. Introduce it in the first sentence (topic sentence).

**Example:** The first major area in which women have become a powerful force is politics.

4. Support your topic sentence with the necessary reasons or arguments raised by the author/lecturer but omit all references to details, such as dates or statistics.
5. Use discourse markers that reflect the organization and controlling idea of the original, for example cause-effect, comparison-contrast, classification, process, chronological order, persuasive argument, etc.
6. In a longer summary, remind your reader that you are summarizing by using "summary reminder phrases," such as
  - The author goes on to say that ...
  - The article (author) further states that ...
  - (Author's last name) also states/maintains/argues that ...
  - (Author's last name) also believes that ...
  - (Author's last name) concludes that
7. Restate the article's/lecturer's conclusion in one sentence.
8. Give a full reference for the citation (see the example below for the in-text citations in #2). For citing electronic sources, please see [Citation of Electronic Resources](#).

**References**

Serwer, A. (1997, Sept. 8). Michael Dell Turns the PC World Inside out. *Fortune*, 76-86.

Steinbeck, J. (1945). *The Pearl*. New York: Penguin Books.

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<http://academics.smcvt.edu/cbauer-ramazani/AEP/EN104/summary.htm>