

HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY

1. Read the passage for overall content.
2. Reread carefully, highlighting the main idea and any key supporting ideas. Look for section headings, bolded or italicized words, and subheadings.
3. Group the reading into sections according to the author's topic divisions and label them.
4. Write a one-sentence summary of each section, focusing on the main point. Do not include examples or minor details.
5. Write one sentence (the thesis) that summarizes the whole article.
6. Write the first draft: In the first sentence, include the title and author of the reading as well as the thesis. Then use your one-sentence summaries to complete the summary. Do not include your own opinion, but *be sure to use your own words*.
7. In your final draft, insert transitional words and phrases where necessary. Avoid short, choppy sentences. Combine sentences for a smooth, logical flow of ideas.

Other useful information:

- Use 3rd person and present tense.
- Be concise and brief.
- Periodically indicate that the summary is still the material of the author.
- Quote the author sparingly, if at all.
- Check for grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes.
- Refer to other useful Writing Center handouts.