

## HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY

### *Other Handouts:*

- Improve Your Reading of Academic Texts
- Mind Mapping

To write a summary of an academic article you need to reduce the information to the key ideas. You must also make sure that the main idea of the original text is not lost. Try the following step-by-step technique when you make notes from your readings. (Remember to make a note of the title of the article, the author, the date and the source.)

### **Step 1: What do you think this paragraph/article/book is about?**

- Write one single, very broad statement, to say what it is about.
- Use simple words and do not worry about correct grammar or punctuation.
- Imagine you are explaining the key idea of the text to a friend who has not read it.

#### *Tip!*

*A paragraph in English always includes a topic sentence which tells the reader what is the subject of that paragraph. Often this is the first or last sentence of the paragraph so always pay close attention to these sentences when you are looking for the key idea of a piece of text.*

### **Step 2: Identify the main points that are made in the text.**

- Write each main point out in note form, and again use simple words.
- Do this in dot format and keep the points in the same sequence as in the text

### **Step 3: Look at the conclusion of the article**

- Write in one sentence the main point that the author makes in the conclusion.

### **Step 4: Put away the original text**

- Combine the single statement from Step 1, the dot points from Step 2, and the conclusion from Step 3 in a paragraph which uses your own words.

### **Step 5: Use the check box**

- Does the summary have the same meaning as the original passage?
- Check grammar and punctuation.
- Is there a complete in-text citation (author's surname, date of publication and page number)?

#### *Tip!*

*Use the preview techniques for an article to effectively pull out key ideas. See the hand out on reading academic texts.*