



Writing Centre

How to Write a Summary

What is a summary?

- A condensed version of a reading
- Only includes the most important concepts or ideas
- Written in your own words with a minimal use of direct quotes

What are the priorities in writing a summary?

- Accuracy
 - Did you report the author's ideas accurately?
- Completeness
 - Did you include all the key points or main ideas?
- Emphasis
 - Did you replicate the importance the author placed on certain ideas?

When you are reading, focus on...

- The **thesis** or overall main idea
 - If possible, paraphrase in your own words.
- The **sections** into which the paper is divided
 - Identify the sections or divisions that the author used to organize the work.
- The **support** used to back up the author's key points
 - Take note of what the author used to support his/her statements, e.g., the most important examples, arguments, statistics etc.

Three tips for writing a summary:

- In the first sentence, identify the author, the title of the work, and the thesis statement.
- Write in paragraph form with clear transitions between major points.
- Organize the ideas in the same order as the original.

What to avoid when writing a summary:

- Repetition of similar ideas
- Minor details (e.g., examples, anecdotes, descriptions, statistics, and dialogue)
- Direct quotes (unless there is no other way to give the information)
- Digressions from the main points
- Your own personal opinions or comments on the subject

