



How to Write a Summary

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WRITING TUTORS

What is a Summary?

- Summary writing is a brief overview of a piece of writing reducing it to its main points
- By doing this you demonstrate that you understand the author's position and arguments on the topic



How long is a Summary?

Your summary should be roughly $\frac{1}{3}$ the length of the original text



Steps to Writing a Summary

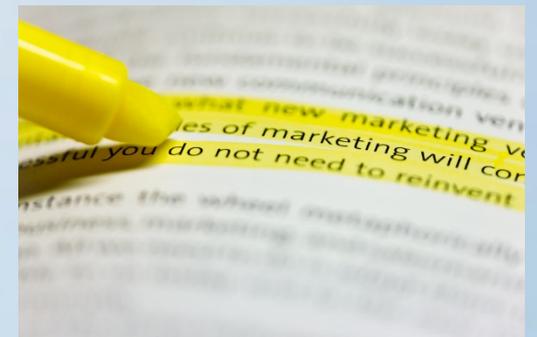
Step 1: Skimming

Skim the text before you start reading it.

How?



- Focus on headings and subheadings
- Focus on any bolded or key terms and highlight them



Steps to Writing a Summary

Step 2: The Main Ideas

Now that you have skimmed, you should read through the entire text without stopping to identify the main ideas.



Steps to Writing a Summary

Step 3: Rereading

- Now you will reread the text, but as an **ACTIVE READER**
- An active reader underlines the **topic sentences**, **key facts**, and **areas you want to focus on** in your summary
- You should also make note of the sections you DON'T want in your summary because they are too specific
- Work one paragraph at a time and write  or  main ideas next to each paragraph

Steps to Writing a Summary

Step 4: Thesis Statement

- The **thesis** should summarize the purpose of the article

The **thesis** should include:

1. Author's name
2. Title of the reading
3. Date
4. Main Idea



Steps to Writing a Summary

Here are some examples of a Thesis Statement!

- In the article, “Karla Homolka has a right to study at Queen’s” by Christine Overall in 1995, the argument of Karla Homolka’s right to study while in prison is discussed.
- Overall’s article, “Karla Homolka has a right to study at Queen’s” written in 1995, discusses the argument of Karla Homolka’s right to study in prison.
- Karla Homolka’s right to study while in prison is examined in the article, “Karla Homolka has a right to study at Queen’s” written by Christine Overall in 1995

All of these examples show the same information, but the order in which they are written is slightly different.

Steps to Writing a Summary

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- Karla Homolka’s right to study while in prison is examined in the article, “**Karla Homolka has a right to study at Queen’s**” written by Christine Overall in 1995

Here you can see the title of the article!

Steps to Writing a Summary

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Here you can see the title of the article

Here you can see the author of the article

Steps to Writing a Summary

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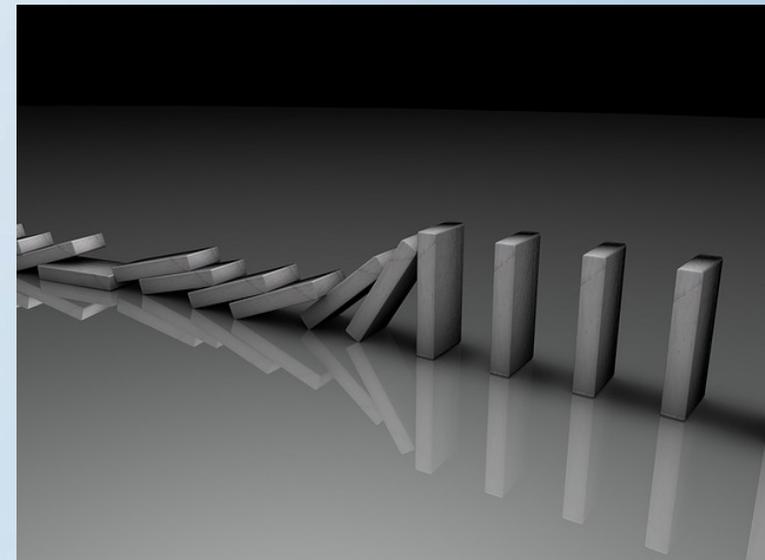
Here you can see the date

Finally, you can see the main idea

Steps to Writing a Summary

Step 5: Construct your Summary

- Use your thesis statement as the introductory sentence in your summary
- The other sentences you wrote in your previous step (Step 3) will now make up the body of your summary
- Your sentences should be ordered the same as the original



Steps to Writing a Summary

Step 6: Writing Tips

- Use transition words to connect your sentences
- Here is a chart of transition words

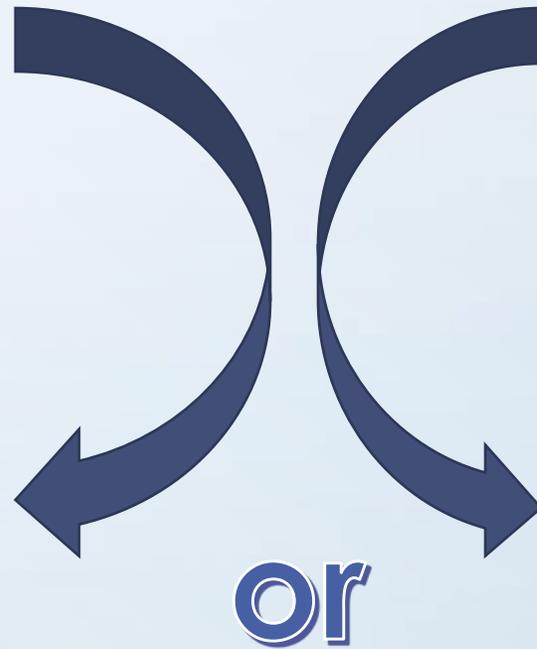
Transition of Time	Results	Examples
First,	Thus,	For example,
Second,	Therefore,	For instance,
Then	Consequently,	To illustrate,
Next,	Hence,	Such as,
Meanwhile,	As a result,	

Steps to Writing a Summary

Step 7: Write a concluding sentence

- A concluding sentence can be either

The final element you
want to summarize



A sentence that
summarizes the author's
main point of view

Steps to Writing a Summary

Step 8: Revise it!

- Now that you have finished writing your summary, you should edit and revise it
- Reread what you have written to ensure you hear **YOUR** voice, not the original author's
- Make sure you have not added your **OWN** opinion or details and examples
- Look for grammar and punctuation errors
- Refer to our slides on Verbs, Punctuation, and other grammar points if you are concerned about this

Review of steps:

1. Skim your text
2. Identify the Main Ideas
3. Actively read
4. Write the Thesis Statement
5. Write the body of the summary
6. Add transitions
7. Write a concluding sentence
8. Review, revise, submit!



You're finished!

**If you found this helpful, please speak to one of our Writing Centre tutors on ways to view these slides on your own time