

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

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The purpose of a summary is to give the reader, in a about 1/3 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. **The reporting verb is generally in present tense.**
3. At the end of your summary, double-space and write a **reference** for the in-text citation (see #8 below), following APA guidelines.

### 1. ARTICLE:

In the article, \_\_\_\_\_ (author's last name) (year) argues (claims/reports/contends/maintains/states) that \_\_\_\_\_ (main idea/argument;  
S + V + C).

**Example:** In his article, Serwer (1997) describes how Michael Dell founded Dell Computers and claims that Dell's low-cost, direct-sales strategy and high quality standards accounted for Dell's enormous success.

### 2. BOOK:

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

### 3. INTERVIEW:

In an interview \_\_\_\_\_ (first name last name) stated that  
\_\_\_\_\_ (main idea/argument; S + V +  
C) (personal communication, month day, year).

#### 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	observe			

#### Other examples of frames:

1. According to \_\_\_\_\_ (author's last name) (year),  
\_\_\_\_\_ (main idea; S + V + C).

2. \_\_\_\_\_ (author's last name) (year) argues that  
\_\_\_\_\_ (main idea; S + V + C).

#### 3. If no author is given, use the title of the article:

According to " \_\_\_\_\_ " (Title of the Article) (year),  
\_\_\_\_\_ (main idea; S+V+C).

4. \_\_\_\_\_ (topic/NP) has had a major impact on  
the \_\_\_\_\_ (NP) of \_\_\_\_\_ (main idea; NP) (author's  
last name, year).

5. \_\_\_\_\_'s (author's last name) article on \_\_\_\_\_  
(topic/NP) (year) discusses the \_\_\_\_\_ (main idea; Noun Phrase) of  
\_\_\_\_\_ (NP).

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 paraphrasing by using "**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](#).

Further illustrations: Please see the video **Tips on Summarizing** on the [Ohio State Flipped ESL](#) YouTube channel. This video investigates the basic elements needed to create an effective one sentence summary and a summary paragraph.

### Tips on Summarizing



### 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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