

[MUSIC PLAYING]

INSTRUCTOR: Summary.

A summary is a brief account of a longer reading. It explains the main idea and key details of the longer passage. Though similar to summaries, abstracts preview main ideas for readers. Abstracts are often provided with longer readings, especially in academic databases. Summaries, by contrast, do not usually appear with the full text.

There are many types of summaries. You may be given a class assignment to write a summary of a longer reading. You might need to write a very brief summary as part of an annotated bibliography. When you read sources for a research paper, you will want to summarize those sources in your notes. You may wish to integrate a short summary of another source into your own writing.

Just as all readers bring their own perspective to a piece of writing, all summaries are also unique. Summaries should however always be fair to the writer's original purpose and main ideas. Summarising well means following a few key strategies.

First, you will want to read actively. Start by determining the topic and the main idea by examining the title and the introduction. Then scan the conclusion to confirm your understanding of the main idea. As you read the text, use strategies such as making predictions, making connections, asking questions, and annotating. These practices will help you deepen your understanding of the reading in order to create an accurate summary. As you read, think about the author's purpose in writing. Is the piece meant primarily to inform, to persuade, or to entertain?

Next, identify the topic sentences of each body paragraph to get a sense of the author's support for the main idea. Consider the support the author uses. Does the piece rely mostly on fact or opinion? Also consider the author's point of view. Do you detect any bias or slanting?

After reading the text, break it down into an outline of major ideas and supporting points. If necessary, trim your outline to cover only what you believe are the most important supporting details. Working from your outline and using your own original wording, draft a condensed version of the author's main point and supporting points.

Whenever you write a summary, record the original source information-- including the author, title, publisher, date, and page numbers or web address. In addition, if you are writing the summary as an assignment, be sure to revise and edit your draft.

For a summary in an annotated bibliography or in your research notes, be sure to comment on how the source relates to your paper. Any time you incorporate summarised material into your draft, be sure to introduce it clearly. Use proper documentation and connect it to your own work.

Remember, a summary is a brief account of a longer reading that explains the main idea and key details of the longer passage. Though they aim for accurate representation of the original passage, all summaries reflect the unique purpose and perspective of those who write them.