

Student Name _____
Student ID _____
EWRT Instructor _____
Date Completed _____



Keys to Success in Summary Writing

Directions: After you have completed this DLA, review your summary with a tutor. Tutors, please use the “Annotate” tool in Zoom to show the key points in the student’s summary.

What is a summary? Write down what you know about them.

What goes in a summary? Write down your thoughts here.

- Above all, a summary must maintain and communicate the meaning of the original.
- By definition, a summary is SHORTER than what it summarizes.
- It must include the author’s name and title of the article and his/her thesis.
- It must contain the main points of the original—the most important points.
- You’ll want to paraphrase rather than use direct quotes.

- You'll also want to show the connection between ideas. (This can be done by repeating "the author states, explains, argues, mentions, says, claims, proposes, points out, maintains, believes, etc." with each of the main points.)

What does NOT go into a summary? Write down your thoughts here.

- It must NOT contain your views or opinions of the original.
- Usually, it will not contain the supporting points, unless one or more of them is of unusual importance.
- It will NOT include details, examples or other minor information.

Why do we need to be able to create summaries?

You will need to do these formally—to turn in for classes—or informally—to help you get the main ideas of all the reading you will do. These skills can help you talk about main events or movies too!

STEPS FOR WRITING A SUMMARY:

Reminder: When we summarize, we are trying to condense material without leaving out any of the important parts.

- 1) Look at the title and ask yourself what the subject of the piece is; take notes on this. The titles can tell us a lot.
- 2) Pre-read. This means reading the introductory paragraph, the first sentence of each body paragraph, and the conclusion. When finished, write down what you remember.
- 3) Read the whole piece. When you're finished, write down what you think are the main points of the piece--in your own words (paraphrase.)
- 4) Read the piece again writing down in your own words, as you go, the things from each paragraph that you think are so important that you should not leave them out of your summary. Underlining the important points and annotating your texts is helpful. Each paragraph may NOT have a main point; a writer may take several paragraphs to do this especially if there are examples and other support.

5) Write the beginning of your summary. It should state the main claim or author's thesis of the piece, the author and the title.

6) Put the points you wrote down in step #4 in the order you think will work the best and write the rest of your summary. Proofread! Remember: summaries are succinct not lengthy.

Now, you can try creating a summary by following the steps. (There may be some words or phrases you don't know, so you can look these up before or after you write your summary.)

Clive Thompson on the New Literacy, *Wired Magazine*: 17.09, By Clive Thompson Email 08.24.09, Illustration: Mads Berg, http://www.wired.com/techbiz/people/magazine/17-09/st_thompson



(1) As the school year begins, be ready to hear pundits fretting once again about how kids today can't write—and technology is to blame. Facebook encourages narcissistic blabbering, video and PowerPoint have replaced carefully crafted essays, and texting has dehydrated language into "bleak, bald, sad shorthand" (as University College of London English professor John Sutherland has moaned). An age of illiteracy is at hand, right?

(2) Andrea Lunsford isn't so sure. Lunsford is a professor of writing and rhetoric at Stanford University, where she has organized a mammoth project called the Stanford Study of Writing to scrutinize college students' prose. From 2001 to 2006, she collected 14,672 student writing samples—everything from in-class assignments, formal essays, and journal entries to emails, blog posts, and chat sessions. Her conclusions are stirring.

(3) "I think we're in the midst of a literacy revolution the likes of which we haven't seen since Greek civilization," she says. For Lunsford, technology isn't killing our ability to write. It's reviving it—and pushing our literacy in bold new directions.

(4) The first thing she found is that young people today write far more than any generation before them. That's because so much socializing takes place online, and it almost always involves text. Of all the writing that the Stanford students did, a stunning 38 percent of it took place out of the classroom—life writing, as Lunsford calls it. Those Twitter updates and lists of 25 things about yourself add up.

(5) It's almost hard to remember how big a paradigm shift this is. Before the Internet came along, most Americans never wrote anything, ever, that wasn't a school assignment. Unless they got a job that required producing text (like in law, advertising, or media), they'd leave school and virtually never construct a paragraph again.

(6) But is this explosion of prose good, on a technical level? Yes. Lunsford's team found that the students were remarkably adept at what rhetoricians call *kairos*—assessing their audience and adapting their tone and technique to best get their point across. The modern world of online writing, particularly in chat and on discussion threads, is conversational and public, which makes it closer to the Greek tradition of argument than the asynchronous letter and essay writing of 50 years ago.

(7) The fact that students today almost always write for an audience (something virtually no one in my generation did) gives them a different sense of what constitutes good writing. In interviews, they defined good prose as something that had an effect on the world. For them, writing is about persuading and organizing and debating, even if it's over something as quotidian as what movie to go see. The Stanford students were almost always less enthusiastic about their in-class writing because it had no audience but the professor: It didn't serve any purpose other than to get them a grade. As for those texting short-forms and smileys defiling serious academic writing? Another myth. When Lunsford examined the work of first-year students, she didn't find a single example of texting in an academic paper.

(8) Of course, good teaching is always going to be crucial, as is the mastering of formal academic prose. But it's also becoming clear that online media are pushing literacy into cool directions. The brevity of texting and status updating teaches young people to deploy haiku-like concision. At the same time, the proliferation of new forms of online pop-cultural exegesis—from sprawling TV-show recaps to 15,000-word videogame walkthroughs—has given them a chance to write enormously long and complex pieces of prose, often while working collaboratively with others.

(9) We think of writing as either good or bad. What today's young people know is that knowing who you're writing for and why you're writing might be the most crucial factor of all.

Write down your summary here.