



# Summarizing: Tips for Summaries of Stories, Articles and Papers

**WARNING: EFFECTIVE SUMMARIES ARE HARDER THAN THEY SEEM**

A summary is a task to condense the material of something rather lengthy into something that can be quickly be read by the audience with understanding.

## Step-by-Step

*An easy guide to getting practice in writing summaries.*

1. **READ** the article – carefully, do not skim
2. **REREAD** the article – highlight and make notes on important parts
3. Write out and summarize in simple sentences the **MAIN POINTS**
4. Formulate a strong Thesis statement.
5. Write the first draft.
6. Edit your draft
7. Write the final draft!

**Conciseness is Key:** *Spatial limitations make it essential to say as much as possible in as few words as possible.*

Eliminate all unnecessary words and repetitions.

Eliminate all personal ideas – convey only the author’s ideas.

Use transitions for a smooth and logical flow of ideas.

**The Written Hierarchy:** Not all information in a written work has equal weight of importance. There are often small sections of wordy background information; focus your summary on those sections filled with the most important information.

**Yes, It Came From Somewhere:** Reference pages are not just for works that the writer has pulled together. It is essential in a summary as well. Whether you have only used the work that you are summarizing, or you are doing a critical analyses summary and have multiple sources, remember your citations and use them appropriately.

**Complete Coverage:** One of the most critical and difficult steps in summary writing is deciding what is essential and what does not matter all that much. Be sure that you represent the full scope of the writer’s work and argument and hit on all key components of the text.

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