

Summarizing

Summarizing:

Writing a brief statement about a longer text that reviews the main ideas in your own words

SUMMARIZING IS HELPFUL FOR

- Checking your understanding of a longer text
- Remembering the author's main ideas

How it compares to quoting and paraphrasing:

Quoting

- Citing an author's ideas exactly as they appear in the text without changing any words

Paraphrasing

- Putting an author's ideas into your own words

Summarizing

- Condensing the meaning of an entire text or lengthy passage into a brief statement that reviews the main ideas in your own words

USE SUMMARIZING FOR

- Reviewing a long text, speech, or video
- Writing an abstract
- Preparing notes for a study guide
- Creating an annotated bibliography
- Answering an essay question
- Writing a research paper
- Recording the results of an experiment
- Describing the plot of a fictional text or film

Tips for Summarizing

- Highlight or underline the thesis, topic sentences, and key supporting details as you read
- Construct an outline or concept map to help you identify the main ideas
- Start by writing the main idea
- Review the major supporting ideas
- Paraphrase information by putting it in your own words
- Be brief and succinct so that your summary is accurate, but significantly shorter than the original text by covering only the most important ideas in fewer words
- Consider your purpose and audience: How detailed do you need to be? Do you need to define terms? Are you writing for yourself or for others? If you are writing for yourself, don't worry about sentence structure.
- Present ideas in the same order that the author does
- If the author has a point of view, explain what it is in your summary
- Leave your personal opinion out of the summary unless you are required to include it
- Provide a citation if the summary is included in a formal writing assignment or publication