

# Writing an Article Summary

## What is a summary?

A Summary is a brief account or statement of the main points of a larger piece of text. It should be written in third person, present tense. A summary has three main components:

1. It summarizes the text as a whole.
2. The material is presented in an objective (neutral) way.
3. It is shortened version of the original work, written in your own words.

## Take note

Before you can write a summary, you need to be familiar with the text you are summarizing. Read and re-read the text, taking notes. Follow these steps for taking notes.

1. **Skim for subheadings.** This will help you identify the main sections and important parts of the text. If there aren't subheadings, try to divide the text into sections yourself.
2. **Highlight (or underline) important informations.** Ask: What is the gist of this article? Find the main ideas of each paragraph or section. Find the answers to 5Ws/H: Who? what? where? when? why? how? A good writer can summarize answers to all six questions in one sentence.
3. **Paraphrase the main points or ideas of each section.** Write the main ideas in your own words.
4. **Write down any key supporting points for the main topic.** However, do you not simply re-write the text. Many details are not necessary for a summary. Just give the important facts and some details that help support them. Skip the minor elements.

## Putting it all together

After you have taken notes, you need to organize them for your summary. Tips to follow:

1. **Present your summary in a logical manner.** You do not have to present the main ideas in the same order as the original write. re-arrange (if necessary) the points in a way that makes sense to you, with the most important point first. be careful, though: make sure the order you present the main ideas do not detract or stray from the overall meaning.
2. **Identify your source.** A simple introductory sentence such as "In Jane Doe's June 2014 article 'an Apple a day' published in Oranges magazine, she emphasizes the importance of eating a healthy breakfast each day." \*By naming the author and article title-as well as publication and date - you are immediately

giving credit to the author for all of the ideas you are presenting. \*this is not a real source\*

3. **Eliminate repetition.** Be concise by cutting any repetitive sentences or points, even if the original writer was repetitive.
4. **Use transitions.** Each time you introduce a new point, use a transition so each idea flows. Transitions can be as simple as: in addition, furthermore, another point, however, according to author Jane Doe, Author Jane Doe points put, etc
5. **Be objective.** Avoid any bias in your summary. Even certain transition of introduction phrases can hint at an opinion; “Author Jane Doe pleads with readers to eat healthier...” The use of the phrase “pleads with” is biased. It has a more negative connotation than a word such as “encourages”. “Jane Doe encourages” says to the reader that it is recommended while staying neutral. In contrast, “pleads with” connotes a desperate request to readers.

### **Format and style of summary**

The format and style of your summary will depend on your teacher’s preference. Check with your instructor for pertinent guidelines (like if it needs to be typed). A good online resource for style guidelines is *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr...<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

