

## How to Do a Summary

### What is a summary?

A summary is an overview of the main ideas, concepts, or facts of a text. The main ideas are given, but details and examples are left out. Summarising is a useful skill for making notes from readings and in lectures, and for incorporating research material into assignments. Long sections of work, like a long paragraph, page or chapter, are often summarised.

An excellent summary should be:

1. Accurate – keeping to the same meaning of the original idea or information.
2. Complete - containing all the main points from the original text.
3. Concise - avoiding repetition.
4. Coherent- in a logical sequence and making sense with the use of clearly linked sentences (not just in note form).
5. Written in your own words as far as possible, to show your clear understanding.
6. Cited and referenced correctly to the original source of the material.

### Why Summarise?

- To outline the main points of someone else's work in your own words.
- To include an author's ideas using fewer words than the original text.
- To briefly give examples of several differing points of view on a topic.
- To support claims in your writing
- To provide evidence for your writing.

### How to Summarise?

The amount of detail you include in a summary will vary according to the length of the original text, how much information you need, and how selective you are:

- Start by reading a short text and highlighting the main points as you read.
- Focus on the topic sentences as these provide the main ideas of the paragraphs (see the [Reading Strategies - Articles/Chapters](#) and [Reading Strategies – Books](#) handouts, especially the Skim Reading section).
- Reread the text and make notes of the main points, leaving out examples, evidence etc.
- Without looking at the text, rewrite your notes in your own words
- Restate the main idea at the beginning and include all major points.
- Check that the meaning is the same as the original.
- Use quotation marks (“ ”) for original/specialist phrases you have used from the original.

Reference

University of New South Wales. (2019, December 23). *Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting*.

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/paraphrasing-summarising-and-quoting>