

Writing an Article Summary

The purpose of an article summary is to present a condensed version of the original piece by highlighting the author's goal, main points, support for main points, reason for writing the article etc. For instance, previews on TV for movies always show the most important scenes in order to tell its audience about the movie. Fine details and examples are omitted from the summary. Also, the summary should be uniquely organized and written in your own words. Following are some pointers on how to develop an article summary.

- ❖ First, **read** through the article completely for understanding. Then go back a second time, **skim** through the article, and **make notes** of the important details. If necessary, use a highlighter to aid in this process.
- ❖ Then, construct an **outline** based on what you feel is the most logical order: most important information to least important information. However, organize the summary outline differently than the original text.
- ❖ Next, **summarize the gist** of the article in one sentence after **identifying** these elements: author, title, place of publication if necessary. For example: In his article "Tuition Hike, Raises Await Regents Ok," *Pioneer* Editor Jeremy Cloud discusses how certain tuition increases are being voted on in order to give OCCC employees a raise. This sentence sets up the rest of the article summary.
- ❖ As previously mentioned, the summary should be put into your **own** words without quoting. Sometimes an author may use a special term or phrase that is specific to that article; then, you can use quotation marks. As an alternative to quoting, one can paraphrase. Paraphrasing includes changing the **sentence structure** and **word choice** (changing only the sentence structure is not paraphrasing). Next is a process by which you can follow to easily paraphrase:
 - **First**, change the sentence structure
 1. Turn *two* short sentences and make *one* long sentence.
-Jon's mom is a great cook. She has lots of experience.
-Jon's mom is a great cook and has lots of experience.
 2. Take one *long* sentence and break it into *two* smaller sentences while *adding* transitions.
-A violent tsunami hit Florida today, causing immense damage to its mainland.
-A violent tsunami hit Florida today. Consequently, this caused immense damage to its mainland.
 - **However**, modifying just the structure is not enough to paraphrase; you **must change** the word choice.
 1. Use synonyms (a word with the same meaning). If you cannot think of an alternate word, type the word in a Microsoft *Word* document. Then, highlight the word and right click. A drop down

menu will appear; choose “synonyms.” Once the word list pops up, select the word you would like to use.

-Using the modified tsunami example from above, a paraphrased sentence using synonyms and added transition may look like this:

A fierce tsunami struck Florida today. Consequently, this resulted in massive destruction to its interior.

Original	Synonym
violent	fierce
hit	struck
caused	resulted in
immense	massive
damage	destruction
mainland	interior

- At last, you can go a step further and modify the sentence structure and word choice once again. This could be a part of revision if the new, paraphrased sentence looks and sounds too much like its original.

-In Florida today, a fierce tsunami struck. Consequently, its interior experienced massive destruction.

- Now, compare the original sentence to your new, paraphrased sentence, and look at how it has evolved into your own words.

Original- A violent tsunami hit Florida today, causing immense damage to its mainland.

Paraphrased- **Florida’s interior experienced massive destruction today when a fierce tsunami struck.**

In an article summary, be sure to refer to the author of the text that is being summarized because the reader needs to understand that you are explaining another writer’s ideas. The following examples provide different ways to accomplish this objective.

1. In the article, the author argues that the melting of the polar ice caps is a result of global warming.
2. Webb reiterates the need for camaraderie in the Comm. Lab.

Try using these different verbs to convey the author’s viewpoint:

claims	says	argues	agrees
questions	reports	expresses	disagrees
asserts	further asserts	implies	assumes
believes	acknowledges	states	compares
explains	describes	illustrates	demonstrates
talks about	posits	articulates	mentions
suggests	insists	observes	remarks
conveys	maintains	declares	exclaims