

SUMMARIZING

Definition:

A **summary** is a brief restatement of the main points of some longer piece of writing.

Main task for summary writer:

Deciding what the main points are, i.e., what to include in the summary as essential to understanding and what to leave out.

Be sure to include:

- Reference to author (full name) and title, with title in "quotes" if you are referring to an article or chapter, but underlined or *italicized* if referring to a book
- Purpose of article (why written)
- General thesis of article
- Specific sub-points (contents, not just labels)

Poor example:

"Russell describes the two reasons why we work."

Good example:

"Russell says we work to keep from being bored and to fulfill our ambitions to succeed."

What you can leave out of a summary:

- Your own opinion/judgment
- Information you know about the topic that was not mentioned in the article
- Examples author gives to explain his main points
- Background material

Important note:

It's generally better to **use your own words** when you summarize. Do not just quote directly from author.

Example of short, informal summary paragraph

In "**Work,**" an essay from **Bertrand Russell**'s *The Conquest of Happiness*, Russell argues that **work is important because it gives a consistent purpose to life**. All work, according to Russell, **prevents boredom** and gives us a chance to **fulfill our ambitions to succeed**. Interesting work, in addition, allows us to **develop and exercise skills** and to **create something constructive**, two things Russell finds necessary for happiness.

Title of article in quotes	Full name of author	Title of book from which article was taken, in italics	<u>Brief statement of author's main thesis</u>	<u>Four main points that support thesis</u>
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Documentation

APA Reference Format:

Stone, K.E. (1997). Competing with the discount mass merchandisers. In L. Behren & L. J. Rosen (Eds.), *Writing and reading across the curriculum* (pp.209-216). New York: Longman.

Text:

“The nature of retailing has changed dramatically in the last decade, compared to previous decades. In the last decade there has been a great proliferation of discount general merchandise stores such as Wal-Mart, Kmart, Target and several regional chains. In addition there has been a great expansion of membership warehouse clubs, such as Sam’s, Place, Costco and Price Club. There has also been a rapid expansion of “category killer” stores such as Home Depot, Circuit City, Best Buy, Toys “R” Us, Office Depot, SportsAuthority and others. These stores are called category killer stores because they have a very large selection within a narrow category of merchandise, along with low process, and they “kill” smaller local stores within the same “category”. We have also seen the development of many new factory outlet malls and the spread of specialty mail order. The net result of this expansion is the saturation of many retail markets, or what is commonly referred to as the *overstoring* of America. Many retail markets have more retail stores that can possibly be supported, and it would appear that a major shakedown is coming in the not-too-distant future, and it may involve large chains as much or more than local merchants (Stone, 1997, 210)”.

Paraphrasing of text:

The face of retail industry has been transformed by the emergence of a wide variety of discount stores. Some of these new establishments are general discount stores, clubs, outlets and mail orders. There are also “category killers” such as Home Depot. As a result of these expansion efforts, the retail market has been flooded. There are now more stores in America than prospective clients.

APA In-Text Format

The face of retail industry has been transformed by the emergence of a wide variety of discount stores. Some of these new establishments are general discount stores, clubs, outlets and mail orders. There are also “category killers” such as Home Depot. As a result of these expansion efforts, the retail market has been flooded. There are now more stores in America than prospective clients (**Stone, 1997, 210**).

Stone (1997, 210) points out that the face of retail industry has been transformed by the emergence of a wide variety of discount stores. Some of these new establishments are general discount stores, clubs, outlets and mail orders. There are also “category killers” such as Home Depot. As a result of these expansion efforts, the retail market has been flooded. There are now more stores in America than prospective clients.

APA Reference Format

1. Journal

Author(s), year of publication, title in “sentence style” capitalization and italicized, volume, number, pages.

2. Newspaper

Author(s), year, month, day of publication, italicized title of newspaper, pages.

3. World Wide Web

Author(s), publication date, title of article italicized with “sentence-style” capitalization, date retrieved, place from where it was retrieved, Internet address.

4. Magazine

Author(s), year of publication, title italicized and sentence-style” capitalization, volume, pages.

5. Book

Author(s), year of publication, title italicized and sentence-style” capitalization, city of publication, publication company

Some examples of paraphrasing to compare

Instructions: Read the original passage. Identify the passage as a _____. (a). plagiarized version
(b). legitimate paraphrase
(c). acceptable summary

The original passage:

Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes. Lester, James D. Writing Research Papers. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

1. _____

In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to a desirable level. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester 46-47).

2. _____

Students should take just a few notes in direct quotation from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester 46-47).

3. _____

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

Source: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/01/>

Paraphrasing Exercises

Directions:

On a separate piece of paper, write a paraphrase of each of the following passages. Try not to look back at the original passage.

1. "The Antarctic is the vast source of cold on our planet, just as the sun is the source of our heat, and it exerts tremendous control on our climate," [Jacques] Cousteau told the camera. "The cold ocean water around Antarctica flows north to mix with warmer water from the tropics, and its upwellings help to cool both the surface water and our atmosphere. Yet the fragility of this regulating system is now threatened by human activity." From "Captain Cousteau," Audubon (May 1990): 17.
2. The twenties were the years when drinking was against the law, and the law was a bad joke because everyone knew of a local bar where liquor could be had. They were the years when organized crime ruled the cities, and the police seemed powerless to do anything against it. Classical music was forgotten while jazz spread throughout the land, and men like Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie became the heroes of the young. The flapper was born in the twenties, and with her bobbed hair and short skirts, she symbolized, perhaps more than anyone or anything else, America's break with the past. From Kathleen Yancey, English 102 Supplemental Guide (1989): 25.
3. Of the more than 1000 bicycling deaths each year, three-fourths are caused by head injuries. Half of those killed are school-age children. One study concluded that wearing a bike helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent. In an accident, a bike helmet absorbs the shock and cushions the head. From "Bike Helmets: Unused Lifesavers," Consumer Reports (May 1990): 348.
4. Matisse is the best painter ever at putting the viewer at the scene. He's the most realistic of all modern artists, if you admit the feel of the breeze as necessary to a landscape and the smell of oranges as essential to a still life. "The Casbah Gate" depicts the well-known gateway Bab el Aassa, which pierces the southern wall of the city near the sultan's palace. With scrubby coats of ivory, aqua, blue, and rose delicately fenced by the liveliest gray outline in art history, Matisse gets the essence of a Tangier afternoon, including the subtle presence of the bowaab, the sentry who sits and surveys those who pass through the gate. From Peter Plagens, "Bright Lights." Newsweek (26 March 1990): 50.
5. While the Sears Tower is arguably the greatest achievement in skyscraper engineering so far, it's unlikely that architects and engineers have abandoned the quest for the world's tallest building. The question is: Just how high can a building go? Structural engineer William LeMessurier has designed a skyscraper nearly one-half mile high, twice as tall as the Sears Tower. And architect Robert Sobel claims that existing technology could produce a 500-story building. From Ron Bachman, "Reaching for the Sky." Dial (May 1990): 15.