

Writing a Summary

A summary condenses information and restates only the main points

Steps for Writing a Summary:

- I. Outline:
 - A. Find the main idea (thesis) of the essay, article, or whatever is your source of information.
 - B. Find the topic sentences for the main ideas that support the thesis.
 - C. Include key words and phrases.

- II. Begin Writing:
 - A. State the source and subject of your summary; e.g., if you are summarizing an essay, your first sentence should identify the author, state the title of the essay, and indicate the thesis of the essay.
 - B. Use your own words: use language that you understand to avoid unnatural sounding sentences.
 - C. You may arrange the information in a different order than the original.
 - D. Write only about the ideas and information found within the source: do not include your own opinions.
 - E. Avoid using unnecessary phrases like "the author believes" or "another interesting point is."
 - F. Limit the use of quotes; use a direct quotation only if it is absolutely necessary to convey an idea.
 - G. Draw inferences; make thoughtful guesses based on the author's information.

Editing a Summary:

- I. Re-read your summary to eliminate excess wordiness such as unnecessary details, phrases, or words.
- II. Combine sentences whenever possible to show relationships between ideas.
- III. Try to express yourself as briefly, clearly, and accurately as possible.