

further, possible topics for your writing, points you find especially strong or weak.

### An example of critical reading

The following sample shows how a student, Charlene Robinson, approached "Student Loans." After her first reading, Robinson went through Sowell's text more slowly, adding comments and questions in the margin and writing about the essay in her journal. Following are samples of her annotations:

The first lesson of economics is scarcity: There is never enough of anything to fully satisfy all those who want it. The first lesson of politics is to disregard the first lesson of economics. When politicians discover some group that is being vocal about not having as much as they want, the "solution" is to give them more. Where do politicians get this "more"? They rob Peter to pay Paul.

After a while, of course, they discover that Peter doesn't have enough. Bursting with compassion, politicians rush to the rescue. Needless to say, they do not admit that robbing Peter to pay Paul was a dumb idea in the first place. On the contrary, they now rob Tom, Dick, and Harry to help Peter.

The latest chapter in this long-running saga is that politicians have now suddenly discovered that many college students graduate heavily in debt. To politicians it follows, as the night follows the day, that the government should come to their rescue with the taxpayers' money.

↑ fact  
 ↑ related opinion—  
 between economics  
 and politics  
 → biblical references?

ironic and  
 dismissive  
 language

politicians =  
 fools? or  
 irresponsible?

example supporting  
 opinion about  
 economics &  
 politics

**10b Summarizing**

A good way to master the content of a text and to see its strengths and weaknesses is to summarize it—that is, distill it to its main points, in your own words. The following box gives a method of summarizing:

### Writing a summary

- Understand the meaning. Look up words or concepts you don't know so that you understand the author's sentences and how they relate to one another.
- Understand the organization. Work through the text to identify its sections—single paragraphs or groups of paragraphs focused on a single topic. To understand how parts of a work relate to one another, try drawing a tree diagram or creating an outline (1 pp. 19–22).
- Distill each section. Write a one- or two-sentence summary of each

(continued)

4 Sentence Parts and Patterns

3 Clarity and Style

6 Spelling and Mechanics

5 Punctuation