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Assignment 1: Summary

Write a one paragraph summary of either Richard Rodriguez' "The Achievement of Desire," or John Gatto's "Against School." (5-10 sentences).

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Some rules of thumb

In the first sentence, mention the title of the text, the name of the author, and the author's thesis.

Maintain a neutral tone.

Use third person point of view and present tense.

Keep your focus on the text. Don't state the author's ideas as if they were your own. (Use author tags/signal phrases)

Put all or most of your summaries in your own words.

Limit yourself to presenting the text's key points.

Be Concise.

3

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- In the first sentence, mention the title of the text, the name of the author, and the author's thesis.

In "Lives on the Boundary," Mike Rose argues against those who call for teaching the canon as a means to democratizing education in the U.S.

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- Maintain a neutral tone.
- Use third person point of view and present tense.

NO : I think Rose's class bias led him to misjudge the value of the canon.

YES : Rose uses examples of socially marginalized students, including himself, to suggest ways in which learning can take place outside of traditional models of transmission and reception.

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- Keep your focus on the text. Don't state the author's ideas as if they were your own (Use signal phrases: Rose states, argues, says etc.)

NO : Teaching the canon excludes these non-traditional students in that it fails to mirror their experiences and does not address how learning occurs within a complex field of conflict.

YES : Teaching the canon, Rose argues, excludes these non-traditional students in that it fails to mirror their experiences and does not address how learning occurs within a complex field of conflict.

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- Put all or most of your summary in your own words.

NO : Rose ends by calling for an educational system that affirms the diverse sources of linguistic competence and deepens our understanding of the ways class and culture blind us to the richness of those sources.

YES : Rose ends by calling for an educational system that acknowledges the value of the various sources of knowledge students bring with them and that, he says, allow for the production of new knowledge.

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- Limit yourself to presenting the text's key points.
- Be concise.

In "Lives on the Boundary," Mike Rose argues against those who call for teaching the canon as a means to democratizing education in the U.S. Using examples of socially marginalized students, including himself, Rose suggests ways in which learning can take place outside of traditional models of transmission and reception. Teaching the canon, Rose argues, excludes these non-traditional students in that it fails to mirror their experiences and does not address how learning occurs within a complex field of conflict. Rose ends by calling for an educational system that acknowledges the value of the various sources of knowledge students bring with them and that, he says, would thereby allow for the production of new knowledge.

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Step by Step Method for Summary Writing

1. Look at your annotations. Skim over any marginal notes that identify the main point of a paragraph or section. Make a list of the main points. (If you skipped annotating for any reason, you will quickly discover how difficult it is to write a summary without a thorough understanding of the reading. You'll have to go back and reread, annotating carefully.)

2. Make a list of all the key terms. This will jog your memory about important points and give you some terminology to use in our summary.

3. Draft a summary of the central idea and main points. Cover up the text so you can't see it. Then, in your own words, write down a sentence or two that states the main idea (thesis) of the text. Once you have something written down, look back at the text and see how well you got the author's main idea across and if you have forgotten anything. Skim through your annotations or use your list of main points, and restate the main points in your own words. Look at your list of key terms for ideas of what else to include.

Read your summary over several times to make sure you have included all the main

points, have not included details or examples, and have put the author's ideas into your own words. Check to be sure you haven't included your own thoughts or opinions. Add and delete as needed until you feel confident about your summary paragraph.

4. Write an introductory sentence. In your introductory sentence, mention the author's full name and the full title of the original text with a very general statement about the purpose of the text.

It might sound something like this:

In her article "The Perils and Promises of Praise," Carol S. Dweck presents research on how to praise students appropriately to help them become motivated learners.

5. Reread and revise. Read over and revise your summary a few more times so that it reads smoothly, makes sense, and is entirely in your own words. Try reading it out loud, too, to catch any errors you might have made. Realize that everyone will summarize a reading slightly differently, though all summaries should include the same major points.