

Summary Chart

HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY

1. Read, reread, and annotate the material.

Carefully read the material, paying particular attention to the content and structure of the piece.

Reread and annotate the material, being sure to note:

- the thesis;
- the primary assertions, arguments, or findings; and
- the primary means of support for each point.

2. Write one-sentence summaries of each section of the text.

Identify the major sections of the reading, in which the writer develops one idea before moving on to the next.

In your own words, restate the main point developed in each section of the text and primary means of support the author provides.

3. Write the first draft of your summary.

Introduce the topic of the reading.

Include, early in your essay, the author's full name and the full title of the piece.

In the body of your summary, elaborate on the one-sentence summaries, clearly explaining the important content of the reading.

4. Check the rough draft of your summary against the source text.

As you review your work, make sure your summary is:

Comprehensive—you have included in your summary all of the author's important ideas, assertions, or findings.

Accurate—in choosing words and selecting material for your summary, you have not misrepresented the author's positions or findings.

Neutral—in choosing words and selecting material for your summary, you have attempted to be objective and fair.

Independent—your summary will make sense to someone who has not read the source text.