

# HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY

1. **A summary begins with an introductory sentence that states the article's title and author.**
2. **A summary must contain the main thesis or standpoint of the text, restated in your own words.** (To do this, first find the thesis statement in the original text.)
3. **A summary is written in your own words.** It contains few or no quotes.
4. **A summary is always shorter than the original text, often about 1/3 as long as the original.** It is the ultimate fat-free writing. An article or paper may be summarized in a few sentences or a couple of paragraphs. A book may be summarized in an article or a short paper. A very large book may be summarized in a smaller book.
5. **A summary should contain all the major points of the original text,** and should ignore most of the fine details, examples, illustrations or explanations.
6. **The backbone of any summary is formed by crucial details** (key names, dates, events, words and numbers). A summary must never rely on vague generalities.
7. If you quote anything from the original text, even an unusual word or a catchy phrase, **you need to put whatever you quote in quotation marks ("").**
8. **A summary must contain only the ideas of the original text.** Do not insert any of your own opinions, interpretations, deductions or comments into a summary.
9. **A summary, like any other writing, has to have a specific audience and purpose,** and you must carefully write it to serve that audience and fulfill that specific purpose.