

HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY

by Carlos García 8/26/2011 6:33 AM

If you are asked to write a summary from an assigned reading, then, you will wonder what the most relevant information to include is. By writing summaries, one can obtain greater understanding of the topics and most importantly one is able to connect ideas of the topics being discussed. The task of writing summaries effectively and efficiently will be simplified if you follow the next steps:

- Establish the purpose of writing the summary.
- Browse the pages, and look out for titles, subtitles, figures, tables, and pictures.
- After browsing the pages, elaborate a mental outline of what is being discussed.
- Read the material for:
 - Facts
 - Relationships
 - Opinions
 - Beliefs and values
 - Institutions, economic agents, historical facts, etc.
- Re-read the material, with the intention of dividing the content between:
 - Very relevant
 - Relevant
 - Important
 - Important but content can be retrieved and exclusion from summary is justified.
 - Unimportant
- Start writing the summary; and, keep in mind the initial purpose.
 - Aim to include content considered as very relevant, relevant and important.
 - Briefly, you may also include statements of disagreement.
 - Remember, summaries are short:
 - You do not need to copy the whole content.
 - Re-wording/Rephrasing is appropriate.
- Review your summary:
 - Are the facts and relationships precise?
 - Am I really interpreting the information correctly?
 - Are my interpretations of the figures and tables truthful?
 - Re-evaluate your statements of disagreement.
 - Is my summary achieving the original purpose?