

**Academic Success Center
Thomas Jefferson University
East Falls Campus**

WRITING A SUMMARY

A summary is a highly condensed account of what you have read, seen, or heard. By focusing on the most important points, a summary efficiently communicates a reliable overview of the essentials.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUMMARY

- A summary is brief (much shorter than the source).
- A summary is complete (this means it mentions all the main points of the source).
- A summary is objective (it describes only the author's views, not yours).

PREPARING TO WRITE

- Read the article carefully--more than once if necessary. Understanding it is critical.
- Underline or circle key terms, phrases, facts.
- Pick out everything that is important. If the author makes numerous points or gives several forms of evidence, number them.

WRITING

- Begin by indicating the article's subject and the author's point of view.
- Provide the title of the article and the author's name.
- Optional but advisable: mention where and when the work was published.

ORGANIZATION

- After beginning with the author's thesis, provide all the main points of the article in descending order of importance.
- Order of main points: yours. This is especially important if the article is circular or repetitive. Rearrange the author's main points in an order that will make sense to a reader of your summary.
- Viewpoint: the author's. If you inject your viewpoint, your summary will not be reliable or objective.
- Emphasis: the author's. If you diminish or increase the importance the writer gives to any single point, your summary will not be accurate.
- Language: yours. Write in your own words. It's okay to quote brief phrases, if the author's language is significant. If you do include quotes, be sure that they are embedded in your writing, enclosed in quotation marks, and followed by parenthetical page citations.