

Tips for Writing a Summary

Toolkit # _____

1st Sentence:

- In the speech / article “**Title of Speech**” name of the author/speaker discusses _____

(finish by writing a general statement of what the ENTIRE article is MOSTLY about).

2nd Sentence:

- The author/speaker begins by _____ (use the 1 sentence description you wrote about the first chunk of text to finish this statement).

Rest of Summary:

- Use the one sentence descriptions you wrote about each chunk of text to help you write the rest of your summary. When important, consider adding the **function** of that chunk of text as well. See the back on how to do this.
- TIP:** always refer to the author by his/her LAST name.
- Use **transitions** like the ones below as you move from one idea to the next to make your summary flow.
 - According to (author’s last name), ...
 - Next, the speaker ...
 - The author goes on to ...
 - The speaker returns back to
 - The author then ...
 - Finally, the speaker ...
- Use strong verbs like the ones below to indicate the ideas you are discussing are the author’s and not your own.

Makes a claim	Questions, Raises concerns or Disagrees.	Makes a recommendation or calls for a change
argues supports asserts claims emphasizes insists advocates	questions speculates Refutes / rejects opposes expresses concern about warns / cautions	proposes calls upon encourages implores pleads urges suggests

*Last Sentence: End your summary with the Main Idea - What does the author want us to think, feel and do?

- The overall message the author is trying to convey is that ...
- The author’s purpose is to persuade his/her audience that ...

Example: Lincoln’s purpose in “The Gettysburg Address” was to inspire his audience to continue to fight and win the Civil War so that the United States could be reunited as a country and live under the ideals of The Declaration of Independence where all men are created free and equal.

Function

Discussing the Evidence the Author Presents

There are 3 types of evidence

Facts, Expert Opinion & Narrative (FEN)

Facts:

- One example the author gives is ...
- To support his/her point, the author describes how ...
- An important fact the speaker brings up is that ...
- The speaker reports that ...

Expert opinion & studies

- Quotes or paraphrases another source or person who is highly knowledgeable in that field.
- Discusses a study or research that has been done by an individual or organization and the findings.
- The author quotes _____ saying, "_____."
- The author describes a recent study about ... that involved exploring ...
- In a study about ... the author reveals that ...
- According to the author, one finding of this study was that ...
- Focusing on research done by _____, the author ...

Narrative

Personal experiences or true stories.

- In an interview with _____, the author ...
- The author describes the case of ...
- The author tells the story of how...
- Sharing his/her personal experiences, the author explains how _____ when _____.

Discussing an author's opinions

(ie. logic and reasoning)

Interprets Evidence

The author explains how this evidence suggests ...

Compare / Contrast

- The author compares _____ to _____ because ...
- The author compares _____ to _____ showing how both ...
- The speaker shows how, on the other hand, ...

Problem / Solution

- The speaker warns that ...
- A concern the author raises is that ...
- The author proposes / recommends ...
- According to the speaker, one solution to _____ is . . .

Cause / Effect

- The author points out that a result of _____, is ...
- Due to the _____, ...
- According to the author, the effects / consequences of _____ will be ...

Defining an Idea or Concept

- The author defines _____ by ...
- The speaker shows what _____ means by ...

Call to Action

- In a call to action, the speaker wants the audience to ...
- Last name of author demands ...
- The author calls for ...

