

## Writing a Summary

A summary is a brief account of the main points of a text. The goal of summarizing is to pass along the ideas from something you've read to another person—to demonstrate your understanding of the material and to communicate what you have read in a concise manner. Imagine you are explaining to a friend the plot of a movie you saw. It wouldn't take you two hours to do so; it would only take a few minutes. A summary paragraph works the same way.

### A summary should contain:

- the title of the article (or whatever work) you are summarizing and the author's full name.
- the author's main ideas and supporting details.
- a brief, objective, and concise retelling.
- your own words.

### A summary should NOT contain:

- minor or excessive details.
- your opinions about what you have read.
- Major quotations from the text.

### Four sentence summary breakdown:

Summary Writing can be done in many different ways, but good paragraph summaries generally follow a similar, simple outline:

**Sentence One:** *Introduce the author's name, the title of their work, and their topic*

**Sentence Two:** *Introduce the author's thesis or main idea*

**Sentence Three:** *Explain one of the author's examples or an important section of text*

**Sentence Four (and Five or Six):** *Illustrate how the author's example relates back to and explains his or her thesis*

### Remember:

**Brevity:** Convey in a few sentences the information contained in the writing. Use adjective and adverb clauses to combine ideas.

**Objectivity:** Do not include your opinions about the writing in a summary. Just demonstrate your understanding of the writer's ideas. Do not distort the original views of the author and do not copy the words of the writer.

**Completeness:** Concentrate on the main and supporting ideas contained in the selection you are summarizing.

**Read the following article and write a summary of it on another sheet of paper, then compare your summary to the sample summary below. (Be sure to cover the sample summary up so you don't see it before you begin writing.)**

## The Link Between Media Multitasking And Impulsiveness

by Elise Hu, *NPR: All Tech Considered*, January 21, 2014

As I type this, I'm also reading a blog post on Richard Sherman's Stanford days, emailing back-and-forth with a colleague about an upcoming interview and Google-chatting with my friend Reeve about Sunday's episode of HBO's *True Detective*. This is probably not unlike your regular media multitasking experience, which I assume is just shortening our attention spans and making us even more easily distracted.

A growing body of research backs up this notion. Students who instant message while reading academic material take "a significantly longer" amount of time to finish the task. Students who use laptops in class were likely multitasking, which correlated with more distraction. And in a recent study by Central Connecticut State University professors Laura Levine, Bradley Waite and Laura Bowman, students who were big into text messaging and instant messaging self-reported greater levels of distractibility and impulsiveness than those who read old-fashioned, paper-bound books.

But in the same study, the researchers found a puzzling result. While media multitasking does relate to higher *self-reported* levels of inattention — that is, when the researchers asked people how easily distracted they are with a questionnaire, the tab-hoppers showed more impulsive and distracted styles. But when the team put their subjects to a *motor* performance test — one that is used to diagnose ADHD, in fact, the researchers didn't find a relationship between media multitasking and being more *physically* impulsive.

"So it's mental impulsiveness, not behavior, that is more likely related to media multitasking," says Levine. "It may be that there are some kinds of inattention that are not related to how much you do [at the same time]."

There's also a chicken-and-egg problem when looking closer at the link between inattention and media multitasking. Does all the quick jumping from one electronic amusement to the next — ahem, "multitasking" — really make people more easily distracted and impulsive? Or are these the types of people who have short attention spans to begin with?

"Individuals who are more impulsive and distractible may be drawn to media multitasking, but their experience with these media then encourages them to jump quickly from one event to the next, further developing their tendency to respond impulsively and attend to distractions," Levine and her fellow researchers wrote.

It's a vicious circle. Now excuse me, as I return to my Google chatting and emailing.

### Sample Summary:

In "The Link Between Media Multitasking And Impulsiveness," Elise Hu discusses the idea that multitasking makes people more impulsive and shortens their attention spans. She cites a study where students who communicated with text messages and Facebook while doing school work felt that they were more easily distracted. However, when psychological tests were done on these students, it did not find that they had weaker attention spans. Many also question whether multitasking makes people more impulsive, or people are already impulsive and that's why they multitask. Hu seems to be in favor of multitasking, based on the Google chatting she says she was doing while writing the article.