

Writing Center Workshop

Lesson Plan: Writing a Summary

<p>Lesson Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduce the purpose and organization of summary<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Indicate that parameters will vary depending on audience/level
<p>Preparation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review lesson plan and handouts2. Check that there are enough copies of the instructor and student materials. Print more if necessary.
<p>Handouts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student Handout2. "Puffins in Peril" Article
<p>Technology: N/A</p>
<p>Introductory Activity: 5-10 minutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduce yourself, the Writing Center and the lesson2. Student introductions – name and class3. Do the Introductory Activity on the handout. After they read the summary, discuss whether it is good or not and what should be changed or added to improve the summary.
<p>Lecture Notes: 20-25 minutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Go through Summary Purpose and Structure handout.2. Emphasis a summary as a:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Brief retelling omitting many minor detailsb. Concentrated restatement of the author's main idea/argumentc. Recount of the reading--not a declaration of student's opinion
<p>Practice Activity: 20-25 minutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. With a better understanding of summary from the lecture identify the stronger elements of the sample summary.2. Have students read the attached short passage, <i>Puffins in Peril</i>3. Have students write the author's main idea in their own words4. Have students identify important supporting details5. Write students' main ideas/supporting details on the board and discuss how the material would be combined into an essay.

- a. Reading *Puffins in Peril* is attached below
 - b. Full source <http://www.timeforkids.com/news/puffins-peril/95516>
6. Time permitting, have students use information to write a summary of the article.

Closing Notes: 5 minutes

1. Review main ideas of lesson
2. Take any last questions
3. Encourage students to come back to the Writing Center

Opportunities for Additional Practice:

1. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/>

Writing Center Workshop: Writing a Summary Student Handout

Introductory Activity:

Read the following summary. Is it well done? What could be improved?

This article talked about the advantages of attending community college. He explained that he was able to take classes like oral interpretation, health, film as art, astronomy, zoology, and English. In fact, “the books of Carlos Castaneda were incomprehensible to me (and still are), but my assigned presentation on the analytic process called structural dynamics was hailed as clear and concise, though I did nothing more than embellish the definition I had looked up in the dictionary.” I really hate Tom Hanks’ movies, so I don’t think he’s a good source of information. He even says free community college classes will cost the US \$60 billion dollars.

Summary Overview:

A summary is brief retelling of the author’s main idea, topic and selective details. A summary is shorter than the original source as it is typically **between 4-6 sentences**. A summary repeats the most important ideas of the source in different phrases and sentences and generally **includes no quotes**.

A summary also **does not include personal examples or opinions**. You, as the writer, are reporting on what the author has argued. In order to write a clear summary you must have a clear understanding of the author’s main idea. Before beginning to write ask yourself: what is the author’s main idea? How do you know? The author’s main idea can be summarized as how the author feels about the topic and/or what action the author wants taken regarding the topic.

Summary Guidelines:

- Include the title of the article and the author.
- Refer to the thesis and main ideas of the original piece.
- Do not include minor details.
- Keep your summary short: 4-6 sentences **may** be a guideline for a summary paragraph.
- Use your own wording. Do not rewrite the original piece or use quotes.
- Do not put in your opinion of the issue or topic discussed in the original piece. Often, instructors ask students to put their opinions in a paragraph separate from the summary.
- In MLA format, use the present tense when reporting what the author says in the article: The author argues, states, believes, etc.

Summary Structure:

- I. Introduce the author and title in the first sentence.
 - A. In __ (Author) _____'s article "____ (Title) _____," he/she (argues/claims/states/believes/shows/other reporting word) _____ (main idea)-
_____.
- II. Relay key supporting ideas, including only major details
 - A. (Then/also/in addition/alternatively/other transition word), _____ (key idea 1) _____.
 - B. Transition, key idea 2.
 - C. Transition, key idea 3.
- III. End with a concluding statement (optional).
 - A. (In conclusion/overall/other transition word), _____ (pull together or final point) _____.

Sample Summary: Compare this summary to the one you read in the introductory activity.

In "I Owe It All to Community College" by Tom Hanks, he argues that community college influenced his own success and can help many other students as well. Hanks details his own experiences at Chabot Community College, which offered a wide variety of both useful and entertaining classes for free. The lessons he learned at Chabot benefited him later in his acting career. Therefore, Hanks supports Obama's goal to make community college free for many American students.

Summary/Response Essays:

If you are writing a summary/response essay, there are a few ways to include the summary in your essay. Make sure to check which organization your teacher prefers. Here are two common structures:

1. *Separate summary and introduction paragraphs.* Write a standalone summary paragraph first and then include a separate introduction paragraph with a hook, an overview of the topic, and the thesis statement next.
2. *Combined summary and introduction paragraph.* Here, the introduction paragraph will include a hook, the summary, and the thesis statement. When a summary is used in an introduction, there is a bridge connecting the author's ideas from the summary to your own ideas in the thesis. The bridge can be one or two sentences.

Puffins in Peril

by Kelli Plasket

Thousands of puffins—a popular seabird known for its cute appearance—live in Maine and on islands in the Gulf of Maine. But the puffins may be in danger. Last summer, the percentage of laid eggs that successfully produced baby puffins was low. Scientists also found a decline in the average body weight of the adult and baby puffins on Machias Seal Island, home to the area’s largest colony. Over the winter, dozens of the seabirds from the region were found dead, likely from starvation.

What’s causing the puffin trouble? Scientists think it may be a shortage of food. With ocean temperatures rising, fish populations have moved around. Normally, puffins’ primary food source is herring, a type of fish. A lack of herring in the area could be causing the problem. Tony Diamond, a professor from the University of New Brunswick who studies puffins on Machias Seal, says the amount of herring in the puffin’s diet has been falling by about 5% a year.

Protecting Puffins

The Atlantic puffin is a small, waddling seabird with a colorful striped beak and pear-shaped body, earning it the nickname “clown of the sea.” Puffins spend most of their lives at sea. They come ashore to breed each spring and return to the ocean in August. The chicks swim to sea about 40 days after hatching. Puffin populations stretch across the North Atlantic, from Maine to northern Russia.

Maine’s puffin population has been at risk in the past. In the 1800s, they were hunted for their food, eggs and feathers. By 1901, only one pair of puffins remained in the state. Thanks to the help of local lighthouse keepers and seabird restoration programs, the state’s puffin population has been restored to more than 2,000 birds.

Now, the birds in the Gulf are facing a new challenge to their survival—and they aren’t alone. Since 2007, Machias Seal Island’s tern population has almost disappeared. In Iceland, which is home to more than half the world’s puffins, and other places, scientists have also seen puffin population declines.

Scientists aren’t sure what will happen to the Gulf of Maine’s puffins. The birds may move further north. Kress says he hopes the Gulf population will sustain itself but that there’s cause for concern. “You never know what climate change will bring,” Kress said. “Historic fish could move out and more southerly fish could move in, and puffins may adapt to the new fish. Only they will know how the story will unfold.”

Found at: <http://www.timeforkids.com/news/puffins-peril/95516>

