

Read the article.

1. **Re-read** the article. Underline important ideas. Circle **key terms**. Find the **main point** of the article. Divide the article into sections or **stages of thought**,
2. Write brief summaries of each stage of thought or if appropriate each paragraph.
3. Write the main point of the article. Use your own words. This should be a sentence that expresses the central idea of the article as you have determined it from the steps above.

NOTE: Include all the important ideas, use the author's key words, follow the organization where possible, include important data and include any important conclusions

4. Edit your version. Be concise. Eliminate needless words and repetitions. (Avoid using "the author says...", "the author argues...", etc.)
5. Compare your version to the original.

In the summary, you should include only the information your readers need.

1. State the main point first.
2. Use a lower level of technicality than the authors of the original article use. Do not write a summary your readers cannot understand.
3. Make the summary clear and understandable to someone who has not read the original article. Your summary should stand on its own.
4. Add no new data and none of your own ideas.
5. Use a simple organization:
6. Unless the examples in the article are essential, do not include the examples in your summary. If you include them, remember to explain them.

Here is an easy way to begin a summary:

In "[name of article]" [author] states [State the main point of the article first.]

For example: In "Computer Chess"* Hans Berliner states that

Example/ Original: Knowing how to argue is a useful skill. We use it on ourselves in order to arrive at decisions; we use it with others as we discuss business strategies or policy changes on committees, as members of the local PTA, a law office, an environmental action group; we use it as fundraisers for a cause, like saving whales, we use it in applying for foundation grants and in drafting a letter to the editor of our hometown paper; we use it when we discuss child abuse, toxic waste, tax cuts, pothole repair, working mothers, and university investment policies. Our ability to express opinions persuasively—to present our views systematically as arguments—will allow us to make some difference in public life. If we lack the necessary skills, we are condemned to sit on the sidelines. Instead of doing the moving, we will be among the moved; more persuasive voices will convince us of what we must do.

Summary: The ability to argue is valuable because we use it for so many reasons: both to make choices for ourselves and to persuade others. Without this ability to argue we lose our power to affect change (Hall & Birkerts, 1998, pp. 222-223).

Adapted from:

Druker, P. (2006). *How to summarize*. Retrieved December 11, 2006, from

http://www.class.uidaho.edu/adv_tech_wrt/resources/general/how_to_summarize.htm

Leibensperger, S. (2005). *Learn to summarize*. Retrieved December 11, 2006, from

<http://www.uhv.edu/ac/research/write/pdf/summarize.pdf>