Steps in Composing a Summary

The primary purpose of a summary is to give an accurate, objective representation of what the work says. As a general rule, you should not include your own ideas or interpretations. Summarizing condenses in your own words the main points in a passage:

* Reread the passage, jotting down a few keywords.
* State the main point in your own words and be objective. Don't mix your reactions with the summary.
* Check your summary against the original, making sure that you use quotation marks around any exact phrases that you borrow.

Here.is a general procedure you can use [for composing a summary]:

Step 1: Read the text for its main points.

Step 2: Reread carefully and make a descriptive outline.

Step 3: Write out the text's thesis or main point.

Step 4: Identify the text's major divisions (paragraphs). Each division develops one of the stages needed to make the whole main point.

Step 5: Try summarizing each part in one or two sentences.

Step 6: Now combine your summaries of the parts into a whole, creating a condensed version of the text's main ideas in your own words.

Characteristics of a Summary

The purpose of a summary is to give a reader a condensed and objective account of the main ideas and features of a text. Usually, a summary has between one and three paragraphs or 100 to 300 words, depending on the length and complexity of the original essay and the intended audience and purpose.

Cite the author and title of the text. In some cases, the place of publication or the context for the essay may also be included.

Indicate the main ideas of the text. Accurately representing the main ideas (while omitting the less important details) is the major goal of the summary.

Use direct quotations of keywords, phrases, or sentences. Quote the text directly for a few key ideas; paraphrase the other important ideas (that is, express the ideas in your own words).

Include author tags. ("According to Ehrenreich" or "as Ehrenreich explains") to remind the reader that you are summarizing the author and the text, not giving your own ideas.

Avoid summarizing specific examples or data unless they help illustrate the thesis or main idea of the text.

Report the main ideas as objectively as possible. Do not include your reactions; save them for your response.

YOU CAN USE THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND WORD-COMBINATIONS

1. The article (text) is head-lined.

The headline of the article (I have read) is.

1. The main idea of the article (text) is.

The text is about.

The text is devoted to.

The text deals with.

The text touches upon.

The text presents some results which illustrate.

1. The purpose of the article (text) is to give the reader some information on …, ...is to compare (to determine) ...

The aim of the text is to provide the reader with some material (data) on.

1. The author starts by telling the readers (about, that).

The author writes (states, stresses, thinks, points out) that.

The text describes.

According to the text, …

Further the author reports (says) that.

The article goes on to say that.

1. The text is (can be) divided into 4 (5-7) parts.

The first part deals with.

The second part is about.

The third part touches upon.

The fourth part of the article includes the fact on.

1. In conclusion the text reads.

The author comes to the conclusion that.