

What is a Summary?

Summary

A summary consists of several elements that preview a longer piece of work. According to Dorothy Seyler in her book *READ, REASON, WRITE*, these elements include:

- Write in a direct, objective style, using your own words. Use few, if any quotations, probably none in a one-paragraph summary.
- Begin with the writer's thesis and then provide other key points. Show the reader how the main ideas connect and relate to one another.
- Do not include specific examples, illustrations, or background sections.
- Combine main ideas into fewer sentences than were used in the original.
- Select precise, accurate verbs to show the author's relationship to ideas . . . Do not use vague verbs that provide only a list of ideas. . . [use active instead of passive.]
- Do *not* make any judgments about the writer's style or ideas. Do *not* comment on your personal reaction to the piece you are summarizing. (28)