

Writing a Source Summary

The first step in preparing a research paper is to gather your sources. Once you have your sources, a summary is required for each one. Follow the instructions below to prepare your summaries of articles or other sources.

Elements of a Summary

1. Objective—**What is the purpose of the article?**
2. Background information—**What does the reader need to know to understand the issue?**
3. Main points—**What are the main point(s) (many articles will have several main points)?**
4. Anticipated result(s) or conclusion(s)

Summarizing Steps

1. Delete **trivial** material (unnecessary examples, seductive details, etc.)
2. Delete **redundant** material (remove repeated/restated ideas)
3. Use **superordinate terms** for lists (instead of *tulips, roses, and daffodils* use *flowers*)
4. Find or create a **topic sentence** for each paragraph/topic

Guidelines

1. Write a separate summary for each article—**MINIMUM one page each**
2. No less than one paragraph per article page (five page article—**MINIMUM five paragraphs**)
3. Each main point gets its own paragraph--**AT LEAST one paragraph for each main point**
4. Summaries must be **typed** and include **appropriate citations**