Summary Essays

Yuying Chris Chang
SLHS

Types of Summaries

1. A brief summary
2. An extended summary
3. A summary-response essay

→ Brief summary + your viewpoints on the author's arguments

1. A Brief Summary

- To summarize briefly each of the author's main idea
- Do not use quotations
- Do not use detailed supporting ideas
- Write in one paraphrase
- Within 150 to 250 words

2. An Extended Summary

- The concept of “a brief example and an extended example”
- Essentially, the steps in writing an extended summary are the same as those in writing a brief one.

→ It contains more detail than a brief summary

→ It contains more than one paragraph

Common Characteristics

- Identify the author, the source, the main idea in the opening sentence
- Use your own words, own writing style (i.e. paraphrasing)
- Write in the present tense
- Write around 150–250 words




The Summary of J.K. Rowling's Biography

J.K. Rowling, born on July 31, 1965, in England, moved to Portugal in 1990 after graduating form Exeter University. There she got married and had her baby girl Jessica born in 1993. But the marriage ended in divorce. To make living, she started to write a book. After making lots of efforts, she became one of the famous writers in 1999 when the first three installments of her Harry Potter children's book series hit bookshelves and took over the best-seller list. While the first film version of Harry Potter's book series came out in November 2001, it created a stunning, unprecedented box office record of earning about $93.5 million. Now the book series had been finished and made J.K. Rowling the Britain's 13th wealthiest women.

原文: http://www.biography.com/articles/J.K.-Rowling-40998?part=0

The Summary of Jane Austen Biography

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is a renowned English author, unmarried in her lifetime. She was born on December sixth, 1775 in Hampshire County. She had six brothers and one sister, Cassandra, who always accompanied Jane.. Jane had a supportive family. Jane wrote at an early age; she was concerned about the life and marriage of women in Regency England. Her writing style is famous for humor, irony and sophistication. Her works, such as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, are marveled by lots of people. Even until now, her works are widely read by people and adapted to movies.

Reference: http://www.online-literature.com/austen/

Practice

Watch the film and write a brief or an extended summary





3. A Summary-response Essay

- In the introductory paragraph, give a brief summary first and **your own thesis statement** (referring to the author's viewpoint(s)—agreement/disagreement)
- In the following several body paragraphs, develop your thesis statement and give the supporting ideas, such as explanations, facts, examples, statistics, or references to authority
- Stick to the notion of coherence and unity

The first paragraph…

1. To start with the opening sentence
2. To use summarizing specific expressions, reading from paragraph to paragraph
3. To paraphrase it
4. To propose your viewpoints (your thesis statement)

The following paragraphs…

1. To use your own supporting examples
2. To refer to the author's viewpoints
3. To use quotation well (not too much)
4. To give a conclusion

Process

Steps by steps

Step 1: Opening Sentence

In "*the name of the article*," *the name of the author* claims…

e.g.
In "The Decline of Neatness," Norman Cousins argues that a "sloppiness virus" is affecting all areas of our society….

Step 2: Brief Summary

In "The Decline of Neatness," Norman Cousins argues that a "sloppiness virus" is affecting all areas of our society. According to Cousins, the sloppy clothing that is so fashionable today reflects our desperate need to conform, making us look as if we had been "stamped out by cookie cutters." Our sloppy speech reflects the same need, but it is more than just in sloppy; it is foul and violent. He says our sloppy language results in casual attitudes toward all violence and brutality and that, as a result, our children are losing the ability to react to suffering. Finally, he suggests that our sloppy clothing, speech, and attitudes affect human relationships, resulting in a sexual exploitation that "deadens feelings and annihilates privacy."

Source: The Writer Response

Step 3: Paraphrasing

- Use your own words, own styles to express what the author mean
- You are the aside speaker (writer), not the author
- Do not distort what the author mean
- Do not have personal reaction or feelings
- Use the present tense

Step 4: Your Viewpoints

… I believe that Cousins's points are well worth considering. In fact, I have found that his "sloppiness virus" has affected my life and the lives of people I know in a number of significant areas.

Step 5: Your Own Supporting Examples

- the sloppiness virus at work in the way we drive our cars
- the sloppiness virus affects our attitudes toward relationships
- the sloppiness virus at work every day in my own thinking and in the thinking of people I know

Step 6: Referring to the Author

- *Chris* argues ….
- *Chris'* evidence focuses…on….
- *Chris* …examines….
- *Chris* points out ….
- According to *Chris*, ….
- *Chris* says that ….
- *Chris* discusses ….
- *Chris* suggests ….
- *Chris* concerns ….
- *Chris* closes his article ….
- *Chris* concludes ….

Step 7. Using Quotations Well

- The summary you write should be full of paraphrases, not quotations
- Try not to quote what the author said, unless you want to emphasize it or you cannot paraphrase it

Using Brackets in Quotations (1)

- Original:

  People go to all sorts of trouble and expense to look uncombed, unshaved, unpressed.

- Quotation:

  Cousins claims that many people today go to great lengths to appear “uncombed, unshaved, [and] unpressed.”

Using Brackets in Quotations (2)

- Original:

  If society is breaking down, as it too often appears to be, it is not because we lack the brainpower to meet its demands but because our feelings are so dulled that we don't recognize we have a problem.

- Quotation:

  According to Cousins, "If society is breaking down [...] it is not because we lack the brainpower to meet its demands [...]."

Single vs. Double Quotation Marks

Example:

Cousins states that people today speak in “chopped-up phrases, relying on grunts and chants of ‘you know’ or ‘I mean’ to cover up a damnable incoherence.”

Rubrics for Summary Writing

_____1. Does the summary have a correct title?
_____2. Does the summary have a correctly formatted title?
_____3. Is the first sentence of the summary indented 5 spaces?
_____4. Does the summary have a correct, formal text structure?
_____5. Is the summary shorter than the original article?
_____6. Is the topic sentence stated in the beginning of the summary?
_____7. Is the topic sentence specific enough?
_____8. Does the content of the summary follow the correct order (time, space, or importance)?
_____9. Does the summary have a conclusion?
_____10. Does the summary use consistent tense?
_____11. Does the summary use consistent person?
_____12. Does the summary have a variety of sentence types (e.g. simple sentence, complex sentences)?
_____13. Does the summary use the proper transitional expressions?
_____14. Does the summary use punctuation such as commas correctly?
_____15. Does the summary have only relevant information?
_____16. Does the writer correctly interpret the author's important ideas?
_____17. Does the writer paraphrase the original article in words?
_____18. Does the writer paraphrase the original article in sentence structures?
_____19. Does the writer have good word choices or pay attention to rhetoric?
_____20. Does the writer use other better writing skill (e.g. parallelism)?