

Using Sources Tutorial:

**Tutorial #21:
Summarizing**

Writing Center

English 800 Center

All notes and exercises should be done on separate sheets of paper, which you will bring to your conference with an instructor in the center.

As you work through the tutorial, make sure to see an instructional aide at the front desk in the Writing Center or English 800 Center if you have any questions or difficulties.

Integrating Sources into Your Own Writing: Summarizing

Most college courses require students to summarize readings. Writers use ideas, facts, or quotations from other authors when writing a paper to develop, analyze, and interpret the points they are making in their essays. Keep in mind that the purpose of using such sources is to *support* your ideas and to *show* that you have thought in depth about an issue. When using sources, such as books, articles, or essays, you must know how to do the following:

- summarize an author's writing (*this tutorial*)
- quote from the author's writing (Tutorial 22, Using Quotations)
- paraphrase from the author's writing (Tutorial 23, Paraphrasing)

What is Summarizing?

Summarizing is an important skill for you to learn because it gives you practice expressing important ideas and finding main ideas in all of your college courses. It also gives you a way to monitor your own understanding and practice making decisions.

When you write essays, it is important to summarize so that you do not have to rely too heavily on quoting. Good writers only quote only when the author expresses an important point in an interesting way. Instead of quoting, summarize to restate an entire argument or to present important information. By summarizing, writers inform readers about an author's ideas before analyzing or interpreting them.

A **summary** is a brief restatement of someone else's ideas in your own words; it does *not* include your reaction. Writers create summaries in both academic and business writing when they want their readers to understand a lot of material very quickly. Whether you are writing a summary for your job or your college courses, you are responsible for stating, in your own words and as briefly and accurately as possible, the main ideas of another piece of writing—for example, a business report, an article from an academic journal, or a chapter in a book. The length of your summary depends on the length of the original piece of writing and the level of detail that your audience needs to know.

Principle I. Summaries include the most important ideas of a longer piece of writing. They NEVER include your own reactions or opinions.

Part One: Preparing to Write A Summary

Before you write a summary, you must read the original text a few times, annotating, noting all the main points and important terminology.

To see how annotation works, look at the following example of an article before a student has annotated or marked it up.

Article Before Annotation

Ash Smith encountered another case of teenage suicide, this one involving a 15-year-old from Vancouver named Amanda Todd. Before she killed herself, Amanda posted the video on the Internet in which she described how a man persuaded her to flash him online, then used her topless screen shot to stalk and blackmail her.

After reading about the case and following the reaction to it on Twitter, Ash began messaging with a Canadian geologist in her 30s who goes by the alias Katherine Wells. Katherine, too, was moved by the story and had reached out to Amanda's mother and won her trust. Ash was impressed by Katherine's willingness to take action and insert herself into events, and they decided to team up to help children and their families. The group, which they called OpAntiBully, soon grew to a core of eight, including two experienced hackers, and eventually a handful of others signed on, including a doctoral student in psychology in her 30s living in Scandinavia and a 14-year-old Dutch teenager whose parents didn't know about his online life.

None of the OpAntiBully members ever met in person, but they began spending hours working together online, using encrypted email accounts or chat rooms for anything they deemed sensitive. Katherine set up a Twitter account, @OpAntiBullyInfo, and encouraged young people who felt victimized to seek them out. OpAntiBully members posted links to resources for depressed teenagers and responded to pleas for help. Sometimes they would offer informal online counseling or send a flurry of encouraging messages to a desperate-sounding soul out in the ether. Other times they would take more aggressive measures, tracking down and exposing the identities of supposed wrongdoers who the group felt had not been brought to justice. Public shaming is a standard tool for this kind of activism, and it was part of OpAntiBully's approach from the start — "it can be great fun to bully the bullies," Ash says.

This kind of outing, known as doxxing, involves scouring the Internet for personal data (or documents, the source of the word “doxx”) — like a person’s name, address, occupation, Twitter or Facebook profile — and then publicly linking that information to the perpetrator’s transgression. The process can be as simple as following a trail the target has left behind or it can involve tricking someone into revealing the password to a personal account or hacking into a website to obtain private information.

The exposure, Ash says, is its own punishment. “People need to learn from their mistakes,” he said. “If it takes shocking or scaring them to do that, so be it. And sometimes we have apologies coming in, because people realize that what they’ve done is wrong.”

--excerpted from Bazleon, Emily. “Online Avengers” *New York Times Magazine*. Jan 14, 2014.

Below is the same article, which a student has annotated or marked up, in preparation to write a summary. Everyone will annotate a text somewhat differently, but good summaries of the same article will include all the main points. **Notice** how the student marked each paragraph, what she noted, and what she did not note.

Article After Annotation

Ash Smith encountered another case of teenage suicide, this one involving a 15-year-old from Vancouver named Amanda Todd. Before she killed herself, Amanda posted the video on the Internet in which she described how a man persuaded her to flash him online, then used her topless screen shot to stalk and blackmail her.

Starts with attention-getting story. Then how Ash and Katherine met.

After reading about the case and following the reaction to it on Twitter, Ash began messaging with a Canadian geologist in her 30s who goes by the alias Katherine Wells. Katherine, too, was moved by the story and had reached out to Amanda’s mother and won her trust. Ash was impressed by Katherine’s willingness to take action and insert herself into events, and they decided to team up to help children and their families. The group, which they called OpAntiBully, soon grew to a core of eight, including two experienced hackers, and eventually a handful of others signed on, including a doctoral student in psychology in her 30s living in Scandinavia and a 14-year-old Dutch teenager whose parents didn’t know about his online life.

This tells me the group’s goal and why the group is formed.

None of the OpAntiBully members ever met in person, but they began spending hours working together online, using encrypted email accounts or chat rooms for anything they deemed sensitive. Katherine set up a Twitter account,

The group never met, but collaborates well.

They offer support for teens and go after bullies

@OpAntiBullyInfo, and encouraged young people who felt victimized to seek them out. OpAntiBully members posted links to resources for depressed teenagers and responded to pleas for help. Sometimes they would offer informal online counseling or send a flurry of encouraging messages to a desperate-sounding soul out in the ether. Other times they would take more aggressive measures, tracking down and exposing the identities of supposed wrongdoers who the group felt had not been brought to justice. Public shaming is a standard tool for this kind of activism, and it was part of OpAntiBully’s approach from the start — “it can be great fun to bully the bullies,” Ash says.

This kind of outing, known as doxxing, involves scouring the Internet for personal data (or documents, the source of the word “doxx”) — like a person’s name, address, Twitter or Facebook profile — and then publicly linking that information to the perpetrator’s transgression. The process can be as simple as following a trail the target has left behind or it can involve tricking someone into revealing the password to a personal account or hacking into a website to obtain private information.

Doxxing seems like an important term.

Conclusion: Ash finds it effective.

The exposure, Ash says, is its own punishment. “People need to learn from their mistakes,” he said. “If it takes shocking or scaring them to do that, so be it. And sometimes we have apologies coming in, because people realize that what they’ve done is wrong.”

--excerpted from Bazleon, Emily. “Online Avengers” *New York Times Magazine*. Jan 14, 2014.

Below is the summary that the student wrote after she annotated the article. Notice how the student used the points that she underlined and the margin notes that she made in her annotated article. Her summary includes all the main points and the necessary definition of the important term “doxying,” but the summary does *not* include her own personal reactions to the ideas in the article.

Summary of the Article

Ash Smith, who helped start the online anti-bullying group, OptAntiBully, believes that outing or “doxxing” bullying perpetrators is an effective method to reduce cyberbullying because it uses bullies’ own methods to punish their behavior. Ash and Katherine started and maintain the group OptAntibully fully online, and it now has eight members from

across the globe who all work to avenge bullies. The group also offers support and resources for teenage victims of bullying.

Part Two: Writing Your Own Summary

To write a good summary, you must be able to distinguish within the original text, what is important from extra information. A good summary should answer the following questions:

- *What is the writer's subject? What position or problem is the writer addressing?*
Whatever the subject or problem is, set this off as a separate paragraph at the beginning of your summary.
- *What are the key or main points of the original?*
The summary does not necessarily have to follow the same order as the original text. Usually summaries cover the most important points first even though articles and reports do not always do that. For instance, with a discussion of a pro/con issue, a summary will usually give all the pro points together, then all the con points together although the original text may not be organized in such a way.
- *What conclusions or recommendations does the writer reach?*
At the end of the original text, the author may offer important results, arguments, or recommendations that should be included in your summary.

Principle II. To write a summary, follow these steps:

- 1. Read the original text and annotate it.**
- 2. In one or two introductory sentences, explain the subject of the text, that is, what position or problem the text is about.**
- 3. Referring to your annotated text, write the body of your summary, using complete sentences and including all the main points, necessary definitions of important terms, and any conclusion or recommendation.**
- 4. Do *not* add any of your own opinions.**

Exercise 1

Instructions: Using Principles I and II, annotate the following article and write a summary for it.

Though gangs are primarily male dominated, research indicates that female gang membership is on the rise. In 2006, the National Youth Gang Center stated that “youth gang membership among girls has been more widely reported by law enforcement than in the past.” In May of 2008, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) found that in high risk and high crime neighborhoods 29.4% of girls and 32.4% of boys claimed gang membership when self-definition was used as a measure.

In accord with several studies, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency ranked young females as the fastest growing offenders in the nation. Female gang members continue to perform the traditional subordinate functions of providing financial, sexual and emotional support to the male gang members. They continue to take on more active roles in gangs, gaining added responsibilities and independence.

Reports from the FBI indicate that the “Sureños” or southern gangs are developing female subset organizations with their own names and hierarchies. Their activities involve recruitment of male and female associates, hiding weapons and drugs (as in most gangs) and organizing crimes, which benefit their subset or gang as a whole.

Although “all female” gangs do exist, they are rare and infrequently the focus of law enforcement. Furthermore, law enforcement officials are less likely to recognize or stop female gang members and have experienced difficulty at times in identifying them in gang related activities.

--excerpted from “Gangs 101: Understanding the Culture of Youth Violence” *Esperanza, Strengthening Our Community*. www.esperanza.us. 2010 (Web)

Exercise 2

Instructions:

1. Review an essay that you have completed that includes summarizing. Comparing your summary to the principles in this tutorial will also help you realize if you are summarizing correctly.
2. Look back at the principles and exercises in this tutorial and make notes on a separate sheet of paper. You will bring these notes and the essay to your conference.
3. Make an appointment for a conference with an instructor in the Writing Center (18-104) or English 800 Center (18-102). To make this appointment, stop by the Centers or call (650) 574-6436. During this appointment, the professor will make sure you understand the concepts covered in this tutorial, answer any questions that you might have, review your answers to these exercises, and check to see if you can incorporate the skill into your writing.

Reminder:

For this appointment, bring

- any notes about the tutorial that you have taken
- your completed tutorial exercises
- and the essay