

SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

➤ **INTRODUCTION: What is a summary (an abstract)?**

Summary is a common form of writing. When you write a summary of a text (e.g. of an academic article), you paraphrase or condense it. Paraphrasing means that you must say the same thing as the original text (i.e. you must keep the meaning unchanged), but use your own words (i.e. different from those used in the text). Condensing means that the summary is a shorter version of the original text (typically about one-quarter to one-third of the length of the original). Summary usually appears at the end of a chapter or article, outlining the major point of the piece and the significant details. In academic writing, essays, articles, and reviews begin or end with a summary too, called an *abstract*. These two expressions designate types of writing quite close to each other as far as their function is concerned and they are about one paragraph long.

➤ **THE PURPOSE OF A SUMMARY: Why to write it?**

The purpose of summarizing a text is to introduce briefly the format, content and conclusions to a potential reader so that s/he can decide whether or not to read the whole text.

The summary/abstract IS NOT just a set of sentences chosen from individual parts of the writing but it also describes the structure (e.g. subdivision into chapters, sections, parts, paragraphs, etc.), what the author's approach is (e.g. description, analysis, comparison, etc.) and what his or her conclusions are.

➤ **THE BEGINNING POINT: How to start writing?**

When writing your summary or abstract you should answer some of the following, basic questions:

1. **purpose**

- What is the author's reason for writing?
- What is the author's main idea?

2. **scope**

- What is the author's focus in this piece?
- Where does the author concentrate his/her attention?

3. **method**

- What kinds of evidence does the author provide?
- How does the author try to convince the reader of the validity of his/her main idea?

4. **results**

- What are the consequences of the problem or issue that the author is discussing?

5. **recommendations**

- What solutions does the author present to the reader to resolve the problem or issue in the piece?
- Does the author recommend action or change in his/her piece?

6. conclusions

- Does the author describe a 'cause and effect' relationship or explain the origins of this issue or problem?
- What conclusions does the author draw from his/her study of the issue or problem?

➤ USEFUL LANGUAGE

The language of an abstract/summary uses a number of verbs describing the content of a text. Below you find the list of the most frequent nouns and verbs:

<p>The article essay paper passage study text author thesis</p>	<p>affirms, analyzes, argues that/ for / in favor of, argues that, assumes (that), attempts to, believes (that), challenges, characterizes, claims (that), compares, concerns, concludes that/with suggestions, confirms, considers, consists of, contains, contradicts, criticizes, deals with, defines, demonstrates, denies, describes, determines, discusses, disputes, documents, emphasizes, examines, explains, explicates, explores, expounds, expresses, extrapolates, focuses on, highlights, illustrates, includes, indicates, interprets, investigates, involves, is about, is addressed to, is an analysis of, is based on, is composed of, is concerned with, is grounded in, gives, looks at/into, maintains that, makes recommendation for, mentions, outlines, points out, ponders, presents, proposes, propounds, proves, provides (an overview of), purports, questions, recognizes, recommends, refers to, regards, relates to, remarks, reports on, reveals, reviews, says, shifts the focus, shows, states, stresses, suggests that, supports, surveys, understands, warns against, writes that</p>
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Connectors expressing time sequences are:

*first/first of all, second, third (fourth, fifth..., etc.), lastly, eventually, finally;
in / at this stage (or step or process);
then, next, during, while, before, after, following, subsequently.*

Connecting words:

*however, first, second, then, finally, thus, for example,
furthermore, in addition, in conclusion, by contrast, nonetheless, consequently, whereas,
albeit, etc.*

Possible subdivisions of the text of a thesis:

chapter, subchapter, part, subpart, sections, paragraph

An abstract/summary format:

The purpose of my thesis is to analyze

The reason for my research is ...

The thesis is composed of five chapters, each of them dealing with different aspects of ... Chapter One is introductory and defines basic terminology used in the thesis: ...

The chapter is subdivided into two parts. Part One describes ... and explains Part Two deals with ...

Chapter Two examines... . The chapter consists of three parts. Part One focuses on Part Two investigates ...Part Three addresses the issue of

Chapter Three is subdivided into two parts and provides an outline of ... Part One illustrates...

Part Two looks at...

Chapter Four concentrates on problems resulting from ... Part One describes.... Part Two recommends changes to be made...

Conclusions are drawn in Chapter Five. ... The main aim of the thesis/article is to prove / rebut / maintain / expand... I suggest that ...

AND MORE USEFUL LANGUAGE :-)**Introduction** (usually in present, could also be in present perfect or simple past tense):

The purpose of this study/article is to investigate the effects of ... on ...

The goals of this study/article are to determine ...

The primary purpose of this article is to determine ...

This study/article is specifically concerned with the effect of ... on ...

This study/article is an initial attempt to investigate the relationship between ...

This study has two major purposes: (1) to investigate ... (2) to demonstrate ...

The aim of this article is to identify the characteristics of ...

The major objective of this study/article is to ...

The aim/topic/goal of the article is to ...

This article discusses/describes/analyses/studies/focuses on/deals with ...

Conclusions (in simple present or past tense):

These results suggest that ...

The results show that/reveal ...

It was concluded that ...

This study/survey/article shows/supports/questions/implies/indicates ...

On the basis of the results of this research, it can be concluded that ...

The results provide some support for ...

The results did not support the expectations that ...
These data support the view that ...

➤ **FINAL STAGE**

Once you have finished writing your abstract/summary, make sure it is:

1. Complete - covering all the major parts of the article/thesis.
2. Cohesive - flowing smoothly throughout.
3. Concise - containing no extra words or unnecessary information.
4. Clear - remaining readable to both experts and non-experts, even in its condensed form.
5. Correct - be sure your abstract/summary is grammatically correct with correct spelling and punctuation.

Last but not least, in order to avoid plagiarism, make sure you cite the sources and acknowledge someone's else's work.