

SUMMARY

Defining the Summary

Summary- A summary is a condensed piece of writing of someone else's writing. It should be accurate and complete along with its brevity. It is not a paraphrase of a piece of writing because it is not saying in simpler words exactly what the original says. It is giving the main information of the original text. It is not giving opinion or evaluation. There should be few details, examples, or illustrations. Unnecessary words should be eliminated.

Different terminology is sometimes used by instructors when they are referring to the summary. Often, this terminology reflects the discipline in which you are writing. You may encounter some terms which are forms of summaries. They are defined below.

Précis- A précis is a condensation or brief summary of a piece of writing. It should be accurate and complete along with its brevity. It should be no more than 1/3 of the original.

Annotation- An annotation is a very brief summary of a source you plan to use in your research study. It gives just enough information for you to know the source's focus and viewpoint and how well the source is supported or authenticated.

Abstract-An abstract is a summary that presents an overview of an article or a report. Many journals publish abstracts of all the articles in an issue. The sciences often use abstracts to summarize the problem being studied, the participants in the study, the research methods, results, and conclusions. The abstract, like the summary, should be clear and concise.

Synopsis-A synopsis is a summary of the plot of a novel or short story. Although it may be longer than the précis or abstract, the synopsis is still clearly concise and does not provide description and detail, including character development. The synopsis is a common expository form used in the humanities.

Prospectus- A prospectus is not a summary in its truest sense; however, it is a narrative or overview (summary) of your project. The prospectus includes what you expect to cover in your paper, your research method and manner, your timeline, and your resources (sources).

NOTE: These brief definitions may help you in understanding the terminology your instructor uses, but you still need to clarify with your instructor how detailed you need to be in your summary.