



The Writing Center

Directed Learning Activities



Summary Skills for Academic Writing

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructor: _____ Course: _____

IMPORTANT NOTE: All the activities in this DLA must be completed in their entirety before meeting with a tutor and receiving credit. Where indicated, complete your work on this sheet.

Objective: Through computer activities, handouts, and other independent activities, this activity explains what a summary is and will help you practice and develop summarization writing skills necessary for academic writing.

Activities (approximately one hour): Follow the steps below and be prepared to explain your answers when you meet with a tutor. Please check off each box when you have completed the task.

1. Check out a computer in the lab and open *Writer’s Resources* on the desktop. Then from the contents scroll down to the “Rhetorical Patterns Lessons” section and select the “Summary” lesson. Navigate through the lesson reviewing pages 1-13. Make sure you complete Paragraph Practice and Essay Practice. Once the lesson is complete, select the report tab, type your name, and press “Print Grades.” **DO NOT EXIT FROM THE PROGRAM UNTIL THE EXERCISES HAVE BEEN PRINTED SUCCESSFULLY.** There is no charge for printing this activity, so ask for a lab technician for assistance with printing. If you need help navigating through this activity, please ask a lab tutor.

2. What is a summary?

3. Read through the paragraph below, underlining the topic sentence and any main examples. Finally, write a brief scratch outline and one-sentence summary of the paragraph.

Food Habits Research: Problems of the 1960s—Margaret Mead

In the United States, within the lifetime of one generation, there has been a dramatic shift from malnutrition as a significant nutritional state on a national scale, to over- nutrition as

one of the principal dangers to the nation's health. Over-nutrition, in the United States, may be attributed to food habits carried over from a situation of relative scarcity to one of plenty and to the development of food vending methods which continually expose people to an extreme amount and variety of foods. . . Today we may distinguish an increasing number of affluent industrialized countries in which it is essential to develop an educational system within which children can learn self-regulation in the face of tremendous variety. Conditions in these countries contrast sharply with those which prevail—and may be expected to continue to prevail—in the underdeveloped areas of the world, where children must still be taught a rather rigid adherence to a diet that is only just sufficient for survival.

Scratch Outline

Topic sentence (main point):

Supporting points:

Summary (one sentence)

- 4. Read the article “Six Tips for a Healthy Spring Break” at <http://www.newsweek.com/id/114551>. Then summarize this page-long article in a paragraph.

- 5. **Review:** Sign-up to see a tutor on the “**DLA Walk-in**” list. During your session with a tutor, explain your understanding of a summary. Explain to the tutor strategies that you used to summarize the articles in this DLA.

Student’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Tutor’s signature: _____ Date: _____

IMPORTANT NOTE: All the activities (4) in this DLA must be completed in their entirety before meeting with a tutor and receiving credit. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor’s signature included.

(Credits: Brannan, Bob. *A Writer’s Workshop*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010. 32-33. Print.
Mead, Margaret. “The Wider Food Situation.” *Food Habits Research: Problems of the 1960s*.
National Research Council’s Committee for the Study of Food Habits Update.)