Writing a Summary
What is a Summary?

- A condensed version of a longer piece of writing.
Summary Overview

- When you summarize you convey the writer’s meaning;
- Your own opinion should not be part of the summary;
- You use your own words and sentences;
Four Basics of a Good Summary

- It has a topic sentence that states the essay being summarized and its main idea.
- It identifies the major support points.
- It includes any final observations or recommendations made in the original piece.
- It is written in your own words and presents information without your opinion.
To write an effective summary, you have to read the original article very carefully to make sure you understand it thoroughly.

As you read, you should identify the main idea (or thesis statement), each major supporting point, and any final thoughts.
To *annotate* an essay means to:
- mark the essay (by highlighting or underlining major points)
- and/or to make notes in the margins of the essay
Annotation

- Annotation is an important part of summarizing.
- You should get in the habit of underlining or highlighting the thesis statement and major supporting points for every essay you read.
- This is an element of active reading
Use your own words!

- The point of a summary is to show that you’ve read and understood an essay.
- Even though you’re reporting someone else’s ideas YOU MUST USE YOUR OWN WORDS!
- This means you must correctly *paraphrase*. 
Main Ideas

- When summarizing, you only focus on the main points, or main ideas.

- You find these in the thesis statement for an essay, or in the topic sentences of a paragraph.
Paraphrase

- A close rephrasing of a sentence or group of sentences;
- Must use your own words (vocabulary);
- Must also use your own sentence structure.
Example

Original Quotation:
“Give me liberty or give me death!”

Incorrect paraphrase: Too close to original structure:
Give me freedom or kill me!

Correct paraphrase: Both vocabulary and structure have been changed:
I would rather be dead than have my freedom taken from me.
Thesis statement from Lou Enrico’s essay “Target and Wal-Mart: Not as Different as You Think”

The two stores are more alike than different; the biggest difference is in people’s perceptions about them.
1. In Lou Enrico’s essay “Target and Wal-Mart: Not as Different as You Think,” the author suggests that Target and Wal-Mart are more alike than different. The main difference between the two is how people view them.
2. In Lou Enrico’s essay “Target and Wal-Mart: Not As Different as You Think,” the author suggests the biggest difference between Target and Wal-Mart is in people’s perceptions about them.
Do either of these paraphrases capture the writer’s point without relying too heavily on the writer’s original wording and sentence structure?
In what ways does each paraphrase fail?

Come up with a paraphrase that DOES work:
Steps to Summary

Step 1: The first sentence should include the following:

* the title of the article;
* the author’s full name;
* a paraphrase of the main idea.
Steps to Summary:

Step 2: The next sentences should summarize/paraphrase the main points or topic sentences. You don’t have to include every single topic sentence – just those that relate most directly to the main idea.
Summary

- Refer to the author by his/her last name alone after you have included his/her full name in the opening sentence of your summary.

- Example:
  In his essay “Target and Wal-Mart….” Lou Enrico suggests…Enrico goes on to say…
Useful phrases/transitional words

- According to
- The author suggests that
- The author points out
- The author further explains
- The essay also describes
- The author concludes
- In closing, the author explains