

- Discuss your reaction to this idea. If you have had an experience that is related to the idea, tell your partner the story. If you can think of a good example to illustrate an idea, describe your example. If you agree or disagree, explain why.
4. For more practice, you may repeat step 3 with several partners. Each time you explain the author's idea and your response to it, the process will become easier and your ideas will become clearer.

ACTIVITY 3 Analyzing Articles

1. Choose two or three articles that deal with the same theme you have already read in Part Two.
2. Look for an idea that is repeated in more than one article. Highlight or write on a separate piece of paper all the sentences from each article that discuss this idea.
3. Discuss with your partner or a small group how this idea is treated in each article. Is it defined? Is an example given? Does the author express an opinion?
4. Orally summarize how the different articles discuss this idea. Present your ideas to the class.

ACTIVITY 4 Writing a Response

Write a response to one of the articles you have been exploring in Part Two. As you write your response, remember the following:

- Responses are subjective. They explain your reaction to the ideas in the article.
- Response introductions include the name of the author and/or the title of the article.
- The introduction to your response should identify the specific idea, either quoted or paraphrased, that you plan to discuss.

SUMMARIZING

Summarizing, like paraphrasing, is your explanation of another person's ideas. One of your jobs as a writer is to place your ideas within the context of other writers and thinkers on your topic. Summarizing is a useful tool for this job. You can summarize an article of many pages or even an entire book in just a few short sentences or paragraphs. Teachers may also assign you to write a summary to check whether you understand the material you have read. We often use summaries in both speaking and writing to tell listeners or readers our ideas quickly and clearly. In academic writing, a summary of someone else's text has four important elements.



Four Criteria for a Good Summary

1. **A good summary acknowledges the original author.**
 - It refers to the writer and/or the title of the work in a formal way.
 - It presents the writer's ideas objectively, without your interpretation or opinion.
2. **A good summary contains only the most important information.**
 - The topic (the general subject of the article)
 - The main point that the author makes about that topic (the *thesis*)
 - The key ideas that support or explain the thesis
3. **A good summary is much shorter than the original writing.**
 - A one-sentence summary describes only the author's thesis, or the main idea.
 - A fuller summary explains both the thesis and the main supporting points.
4. **A good summary paraphrases any information taken from the original writing.**
 - Paraphrasing shows that you understand what the author is saying.

Below is an article about why people procrastinate. Following the article there are two summary examples. The first is a one-sentence summary that explains the authors' thesis. The second is a longer, complete summary that includes both the thesis and the main supporting points of the article.

"Coping with Procrastination"

Rebecca Moore, Barbara Baker, and Arnold Packer
College Success, 1997

- Any discussion of time management would not be complete without an examination of the most well-intentioned person's worst enemy—procrastination. The dictionary (*Webster's New Collegiate*) defines *procrastination* as "the act of putting off intentionally and habitually the doing of something that should be done." Interestingly, most
- 5 procrastinators do not feel that they are acting intentionally. On the contrary, they feel that they fully *intend* to do whatever it is, but they simply cannot, will not, or—bottom line—they *do not* do it. Procrastinators usually have good reasons for their procrastination (some would call them excuses): "didn't have time," "didn't feel well," "couldn't figure out what to do," "couldn't find what I needed," "the weather was too
 - 10 bad"—the list is never-ending.

Even procrastinators themselves know that the surface reasons for their procrastination are, for the most part, not valid. When procrastination becomes extreme, it is a self-destructive course, and, yet, people feel that they are powerless to

stop it. This perception can become reality if the underlying cause is not uncovered.

- 15 Experts have identified some of the serious underlying causes of procrastination. Think about them the next time you find yourself struck by this problem.

Often procrastination stems from a real or imagined fear or worry that is focused not so much on the thing you are avoiding but its potential consequences. For instance, your procrastination over preparing for an oral presentation could be based
20 on your fear that no matter how well prepared you are, you will be overcome by nerves and forget whatever you are prepared to say. Every time you think about working on the speech, you become so worried about doing "a bad job" that you have to put the whole thing out of your mind to calm down. You decide that you will feel calmer about it tomorrow and will be in a much better frame to tackle it. Tomorrow the scenario gets
25 repeated. The best way to relieve your anxiety would be to dig in and prepare well so that you can't possibly do poorly.

Being a perfectionist is one of the main traits that spawns fear and anxiety. Whose expectations are we afraid of not meeting? Often it is our own harsh judgment of ourselves that creates the problem. We set standards that are too high and then
30 judge ourselves too critically. When you picture yourself speaking before a group, are you thinking about how nervous the other students will be as well, or are you comparing your speaking abilities to the anchorperson on the six o'clock news? A more calming thought is to recall how athletes measure improvements in their performances by tracking and trying to improve on their own "personal best."
35 Champions have to work on beating themselves in order to become capable of competing against their opponents. Concentrating on improving your own past performance, and thinking of specific ways to do so, relieves performance anxiety.

On the surface this would seem to be the reason for all procrastination, and the obvious answer is for the procrastinator to find a way to "get motivated." There are
40 situations where lack of motivation is an indicator that you have taken a wrong turn. When you seriously do not want to do the things you need to do, you may need to reevaluate your situation. Did you decide to get a degree in Information Systems because everyone says that's where the high paying jobs are going to be, when you really want to be a social worker or a travel agent? If so, when you find yourself shooting
45 hoops or watching television when you should be putting in time at the computer lab, it may be time to re-examine your decision. Setting out to accomplish something difficult when your heart isn't in it is often the root cause of self-destructive behavior.

Often procrastination is due to an inability to concentrate or a feeling of being overwhelmed and indecisive. While everyone experiences these feelings during a
50 particularly stressful day or week, a continuation of these feelings could indicate that you are in a state of burnout. Burnout is a serious problem that occurs when you have overextended yourself for too long a period of time. It is especially likely to occur if you are pushing yourself both physically and mentally. By failing to pace yourself, you will "hit the wall," like a long distance runner who runs too fast at the beginning of the race.
55 Overworking yourself for too long without mental and physical relaxation is a sure way to run out of steam. Learning to balance your time and set realistic expectations for yourself will prevent burnout.

Sometimes you put off doing something because you literally don't know how to do it. This may be hard to admit to yourself, so you may make other excuses. When

- 60 you can't get started on something, consider the possibility that you need help. For example, if you get approval from your favorite instructor for a term paper topic that requires collecting data and creating graphics, you can be stymied if you don't have the necessary skills and tools to do the work and do it well. Does the collection and analysis of the data require the use of a software program that you don't have and
65 cannot afford to buy? Sometimes it is difficult to ask for help and sometimes it is even hard to recognize that you need help. When you feel stymied, ask yourself, "Do I need help?" Do you need information but haven't a clue as to where to go to get it? Have you committed to doing something that is really beyond your level of skills? Being able to own up to personal limitations and seek out support and
70 resources where needed is a skill used every day by highly successful people.

EXAMPLE: ONE-SENTENCE SUMMARY

In "Coping with Procrastination," Moore, Baker, and Packer discuss the fundamental reasons why people put off doing things and how to overcome these issues.

- A one-sentence summary includes only the author's thesis, plus the name of the author and/or the title of the article.

EXAMPLE: FULL SUMMARY

In their article "Coping with Procrastination," Moore, Baker, and Packer suggest that, in order to change the habit of procrastination, it is essential to look below the surface for the real reasons why one puts off doing things. Worry about bad results can cause procrastination, but a better way to approach the task you dread is to be very sure you are so ready that nothing bad can happen. If a person expects nothing less than perfection from himself, he will fear failure and simply not begin the task. A suggestion for dealing with this is to copy athletes who strive to achieve their own best effort rather than comparing themselves with the champion in their field. Sometimes motivation is the problem; a person may feel trapped by a bad decision that no longer matches his desires. Re-examining one's goals may help. Burnout, or exhaustion from pushing oneself too hard for too long, can lead to procrastination. In this situation, it is essential to set doable goals. Finally, a person may avoid doing a task because of a real lack of knowledge or experience about the job at hand. Seeking assistance from others can make the task less forbidding.

- A full summary includes the name of the author and/or the title of the article, the author's thesis, and the main ideas that support it.



Two Techniques for Identifying Main Ideas for a Summary

One of the challenges of summarizing is that we must choose which information to include, keeping in mind the principles of being complete and objective. You can choose one of the three techniques that follow to help you identify the main ideas in an article.

TECHNIQUE 1: UNDERLINING KEY IDEAS

1. Read the article completely several times to develop a basic understanding of the ideas presented.
2. With a highlighting pen, mark each idea in the article that you believe is important.
 - Often, although not always, you will find that each paragraph has a key sentence. It is often the first or last sentence in a paragraph.
 - Look for key words that are repeated throughout the article. These repeated words and phrases will help you identify main ideas.
 - If you find that you have highlighted most or all of the sentences in a paragraph, you may be highlighting supporting details rather than main ideas.
 - If so, go back and underline only the main ideas in the sentences that you highlighted.
3. When you finish highlighting, read each sentence again to ensure you understand it.
4. Use either the tell-a-friend or chunking method to paraphrase each sentence you highlighted.
5. You can use these paraphrased ideas in your summary.

NOW YOU TRY

Re-read the article "Coping with Procrastination." As you read, underline the one or two sentences from each paragraph that you believe are the most important points. Check the sentences you have chosen against the full summary of the article on page 22.

TECHNIQUE 2: DIVIDING AND DESCRIBING

1. With a pen in hand, read the entire article, "Coping with Procrastination." Each time you sense that the topic is shifting, draw a vertical line where you think the shift begins.
 - Don't analyze how the topic is changing. Let your intuition do the work.
 - Throughout the article, draw a line each time you feel the topic shifts.
2. By drawing these lines you have created sections. In a longer article, you will discover that paragraphs are grouped together according to common topics.
 - Analyze the topic of each section you have created.
 - Write a phrase or short sentence that explains the topic of each section.

3. The topics of these groups of paragraphs are usually the author's main supporting points. Examining how many paragraphs an author uses to discuss a single idea can help you decide which information is most important and should be included in your summary.
4. Use your list of phrases describing the sections to write your summary.

NOW YOU TRY



In the copy of the article "Coping with Procrastination" on the website at <http://esl.hmco.com/students>, a line has been drawn each time the topic shifts. In the first two sections, a short phrase describing the topic has been given. Write a short phrase or sentence describing the topic of the other three sections of the article.

TECHNIQUE 3: SUMMARY GRID

Sometimes it is helpful to lay out your notes in a visual way. Using a grid is one way to help organize the information in an article.

1. Use a grid to take notes on each paragraph or section of several paragraphs.
 - Writing main ideas and supporting details in separate columns is a good way to help distinguish between the two.
2. Use your notes to create a summary of your article.
 - Remember, a summary focuses on main ideas. Details are usually not included in summaries. In some cases, a specific example from the article might be included.
3. Here is an example of a summary grid created by a student after reading an article on the negative aspects of drinking bottled water.

Example Summary Grid

Paragraph(s)	Main Idea	Some Supporting Details
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottled water may not be any safer than tap water. 	
2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottled water manufacturers don't have to disclose the source of their water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yosemite brand comes from a Los Angeles suburb. • Everest brand comes from Texas.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPA requires fewer contamination tests for bottled water than city water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FDA only tests once a year, or if there is a complaint.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic bottles are a source of water contamination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacteria develop in bottles. • Chemicals leach from plastic material.

NOW YOU TRY

Use the grid below to take notes on each paragraph of the article “Coping with Procrastination.”

Summary Grid

Paragraph(s)	Main Idea	Some Supporting Details



To print out a copy of this grid, go to the *Sourcework* website at <http://esl.hmco.com/students>.



Two Steps for Writing a Summary

1. **Write an introductory sentence or two that includes three pieces of information:**
 - The title of the article or source
 - The name of the author(s)
 - The author's thesis, or main idea
2. **Write the body that describes the main ideas in the original source. This may be one or more paragraphs, depending on the length of the original writing.**

INTRODUCING YOUR SUMMARY

You can choose how you want to arrange the information in your introduction. Below are two possible formats.

Format 1: One Sentence

In (title of article), (author's name) writes/discusses (article thesis).

EXAMPLE

In “Mind Over Mass Media,” Pinker (2010) writes that both lab research and actual experience show that people are incapable of doing several things at once; as an example of this fact, he mentions the frequent sight of a person driving dangerously while using a cell phone.

NOTE: This format appears in the one-sentence example summary on page 22.

Format 2: Two Sentences

(Name of author) writes about (article topic) in (his/her/their) article, (name of article). The second sentence of the summary introduction describes the thesis.

EXAMPLE

Pinker (2010) writes about the fallacy of multitasking in his article "Mind Over Mass Media." He says that both lab research and actual experience show that people are incapable of doing several things at once; as an example, he mentions the frequent sight of a person driving dangerously while using a cell phone.

NOW YOU TRY

Using Format 2, write an introduction for a summary of "Coping with Procrastination."

DESCRIBING THE MAIN IDEAS

After you introduce the author, title, and main idea or thesis of the original, use the notes you made with one of the Techniques for Identifying Main Ideas for a Summary on page 23 to write the body of your summary.

**Combining a Summary and a Response**

Sometimes you might want to combine a summary with a response as a means of exploring sources for your research paper. In this case, your summary appears first and your response is second. Your summary may be a one-sentence summary or a fuller summary, depending on your assignment. Your response may focus on just one or two ideas or it may discuss the entire article.

1. Write an introduction that summarizes the article and tells the reader which ideas you plan to discuss.

- The name of the author and the title of the source
- A summary of the article
- A statement of the idea or ideas you will respond to

2. Write your response, or reaction, to the ideas in the article. This includes paraphrases of specific ideas you will discuss.

- Your response to one or more ideas from the article
- Paraphrases of each idea as you discuss it

SUMMARY AND RESPONSE EXAMPLE

author—— Susan Scarf Merrell (1995) writes about birth order in her book *The Accidental Bond*. She explains whether it is true or a myth that birth order can predict a person's future. Even though many people think that birth order defines a person's life, other important factors such as culture, gender, social and economic status affect a person's achievement. Two important issues from the book that I would like to discuss are Merrell's statements about gender and culture. For me, they are connected to each other.

The first issue is about gender. Merrell (1995) indicates that if the firstborn in the family is a girl, she has different experiences than her brothers. I agree with her because her statement applies in my own culture. Even though Mexican culture about "machismo" is changing, it still exists in our society. By the term "machismo," I mean that men are considered more important than women. In some Mexican families the gender of the firstborn is very important. If the firstborn is a boy, he will receive more benefits or advantages than a girl. Also, he will receive more privileges and he will have access to more things. For example, in my father's family he was the firstborn, so he had the opportunity to study in Mexico City from the time he was 12 years old (the family used to live in a little town far from Mexico City). However, his sisters had to wait to study outside the town until they were more than 18 years old. They went to live in a city close to their parents' house so their parents could visit them every weekend.

The next important idea is about culture. Merrell (1995) indicates that if a firstborn in a wealthy family is a boy, he receives the economic and powerful benefits of his family. In the "machismo" culture the primogeniture is supposed to inherit the control of the family's business and money. Therefore, for the family, it is very important that the firstborn is a man because they think that a man has more intelligence or capacity than a woman. For instance, a very famous Mexican family from the North of the country, which owns a big company, had as firstborn a girl, but they did not give her all the control of the business. They gave her a comfortable and nice life as a member of the family. However, the second born was a boy, and he has in his hands the control of the business because he is a man. Nowadays, he is the president of his family's business.

In conclusion, in these cases, gender and culture affect a person's development more than birth order, therefore it is only a myth. Merrell's thesis is interesting and I agree with her. It is important to remember that factors such as culture, gender, social and economical status influence the development of a person.

NOW YOU TRY

Work with a partner to label the following parts in the summary and response example on birth order.

1. Author of book discussed in summary (This one has been done for you.)
2. Title of the source (a book)

3. Summary of the source
4. Two ideas in the book that the writer will respond to
5. Paraphrase of first idea writer will respond to
6. Writer's explanation of her response
7. Paraphrase of second idea writer will respond to
8. Explanation of her response to second idea
9. Conclusion

ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE SUMMARIZING

ACTIVITY 1 Sharing Ideas for a Summary

Do this activity when everyone in the class is reading the same article in Part Two for possible use in your guided research paper.

1. For homework, read the assigned article from Part Two. As you read, underline what you believe are the key ideas or complete a summary grid (review the example grid on page 24). Bring your underlined article or summary grid to class for discussion.
2. In a small group, work through the article paragraph by paragraph and discuss which ideas you have selected and why.
3. Share your list with the class.
4. If there is time, work with your group to write a summary using the ideas from your list.

ACTIVITY 2 Dividing and Describing

1. Working by yourself, read through an article from Part Two and draw a vertical line at each point where you feel the topic shifts.
2. In a small group with others who have read the same article, share where you have drawn lines and discuss why you think your divisions make sense.
3. Try to come to an agreement with your group about where the topic shifts and how the article should be divided.
4. With your group, describe the main idea of each section of the article in one or two sentences.
5. Share your divisions and descriptions with the rest of the class.
6. As a class or in your small group, use your descriptions to write a summary of the article.

ACTIVITY 3 Writing a Summary

- Write a summary, or a summary and response, of an article that you have been reading in Part Two. Use one of the strategies described in class to help you identify the main ideas of your article.
- The summary introduction should include the name of the author and the author's thesis.
- Remember that a summary contains only the most important information and is shorter than the original.