

## Paragraph Summaries

Summaries vary in content and emphasis according to the purposes they serve. The chief purpose of the summary for our course, however, will be to provide essential introductory information in argumentative essays. The summary condenses important points of other arguments into your own words and thus allows you to incorporate another author's position into your own argument.

Things a Summary Should Have/Be	Things a Summary Should Not Have/Be
The author's main claim clearly stated The author's major reason(s) The author's conclusions or suggestions	Specific details, examples, or facts (unless <i>absolutely</i> essential to the essay)
Logical connections between claims and reasons	Unconnected statements about the essay
Paraphrased in your own words	Direct quotes from the essay (very short phrases may be quoted when necessary)
Clear and sufficient attributive tags	The author's words presented as your own
As objective as possible	Subjective (you must be fair to the author)
Short (about 100-150 words or less)	As long as the original

### Procedure for Writing Summaries

- Read the material quickly to get an overall impression and understanding of the topic, annotating as you go along.
- Reread the material more closely, continue annotation. On a separate sheet of paper, list the main points. Pay special attention to the first and last sentence of every paragraph.
- Collect your notes and main points and organize them into a rough draft.
- Read through your rough draft and delete items which seem secondary or irrelevant.
- Rewrite the summary into your own words. Be sure to use sufficient attributive tags and "because" words to make clear the author's claims and reasons.

### Sample Paragraph Summary

*Title identifies the author and the work*

A Summary of David Moberg's "Corporate Crimes"

*Moberg's claim is clearly stated in the first sentence*

*Attributive tag*

According to David Moberg, American irresponsibility is the product of a culture controlled by corporations which become irresponsible in the quest to benefit their stockholders. They do so because America is a society of people who, though hardworking, are fundamentally self-centered. Moberg notes that although the "bottom half" of society usually gets accused of social irresponsibility, the "top-half" of society (those who run the corporations) is just as irresponsible; in fact, although they control more of the country's wealth, these business leaders do less to help those in need. Corporations also are irresponsible because they use their power over the general population and many politicians to control our laws in ways that benefit themselves. However, Moberg argues, people overlook this behavior because corporations have an extreme influence on society. Therefore, we must increase corporate responsibility in order to bring about significant growth in personal responsibility.

*"Because" word signals Moberg's "reason" for his claim*

*This sentence provides an elaboration of the reason*

*Refers back to claim*

*Signals Moberg's conclusion*