

## WR112

### Criteria for Writing a Summary

A summary is a condensed version of a larger story. It should briefly but comprehensively describe the *essential* information from the original. In contrast to an outline (which uses sequences of numbers and letters, or bullet points), a summary should be written in continuous prose form, i.e. in paragraph form. A summary should be considerably shorter than the article it summarizes. For purposes of this assignment, two double-spaced pages should be enough.

When summarizing an article, be sure to **include** the following:

- Author
- Title
- Topic
- Thesis
- Main points/arguments
- *Significant* examples

You should **omit** the following from a summary:

- Repetition
- Minor examples
- Minor details
- Any analysis, opinions, interpretations, or conclusions (even your own) that are not present in the original text

Important points to remember when summarizing:

- Try to restate what the author writes as objectively as possible.
- Use simple present tense to describe the content of the article.
- Answer the reporter's questions: who, what, when, where, why, how.
- Use the author's full name the first time you mention it. Thereafter, use only the author's last name, not her first name or full name.
- For example, in your introduction, you might write: "In the article, 'How Does Our Language Shape the Way We Think?' Lera Boroditsky examines how speakers of different languages discuss space, and time." Later, you might write, "Boroditsky [not Lera, or Lera Boroditsky] focuses on how Australian Aboriginal perceive spatial relationships."
- If you write concisely and precisely, you can provide specific information that is much more helpful to the reader than vague, general explanations that just take up space.
- For example, instead of writing, "The author talks about lots of different languages," you could write: "Boroditsky examines languages as diverse as Russian, Mandarin, and Kuuk Thaayorre, an Australian Aboriginal language."
- Use appropriate verbs to express that author's actions. For example, if the author is:
  - Making a claim: argue, assert, insist, etc.
  - Expressing agreement: acknowledge, agree, endorse, reaffirm, etc.
  - Questioning or disagreeing: deny, question, refute, reject, etc.
  - Making recommendations: advocate, demand, urge, etc.