

# How to Write a Summary: Some Guidelines

Anna Cvetkova

[e-mail: anna.cvetkova@rsu.lv](mailto:anna.cvetkova@rsu.lv)



## ***A summary is:***

*“putting yourself in the shoes of someone else” (Birkenstein & Graff, 2013, p.31)*

- Briefly stated **key points** of the article/text/study written in **your own words (paraphrasing)**;

## ***Actions to Take:***

- ❑ **Shorten** the text (**key points**) –leave out evaluations, examples, interpretations;
- ❑ **Skim** the text **without taking notes**  
(Headline is important);
- ❑ **Read** text again to understand more **details**;
- ❑ **Try** to describe the text in your own words;

## ***Actions to Take:***

- **Make** notes (use keywords). Underline important words in the text you will paraphrase;
- **Write** a draft of your summary;
- **Form** sentences with the help of your keywords to reflect the main content of the text;

## ***Actions to Take:***

- **Connect** sentences with suitable conjunctions.
- **Ask** yourself questions as you write:  
*What is the purpose of the text?*  
*What questions were asked/discussed?*  
*What assumptions did the author make?*  
*What were major findings?*
- Use **Present Simple** in reference *to the author*.  
*The author* refers to Carl Rogers ...  
Write sentences in Reported Speech;
- Use **paraphrasing** technique (see slides 7,8).

## ***Use reporting verbs (Present Simple) :***

The text/information deals with/discusses...

It is defined/suggested/clarified/explored...

The author focuses on/describes...

Further on it is presented/highlighted/outlined....

The author indicates/mentions/states...

The author refers to Carl Rogers who claims...

It is analysed/compared/explained...

It is questioned...

## ***Actions to Take:***

□ **Check** your summary. Watch out for spelling mistakes and avoid plagiarism.

### **Remember about the structure of paragraph:**

- *Use **topic** sentences;*
- *Use **supporting** sentences;*
- *Use **concluding** sentences.*

(check the ppt on *Construction of a paragraph*)

## ***How to paraphrase:***

□ It aims at **restating** the relevant information.

### **Note:**

- has a different structure to the original;
- has mainly different vocabulary;
- retains the same meaning;
- keeps some phrases from the original that are in common use.



## ***How to paraphrase:***

- change vocabulary by using synonyms;
- change word class (noun, verb, adjective);
- change word order;
- Use reporting verbs (claim, argue, point out and etc.);
- preserve original meaning.

# ***Conjunctions/linking words:***

More information:

[https://master-academia.com/linking-words-academic-writing/?expand\\_article=1](https://master-academia.com/linking-words-academic-writing/?expand_article=1)

## ***Used materials:***

Bailey. S. (2011) *Academic Writing. A handbook for International Students*. Third Edition. New York: Routledge

Birkenstein. C. & Graff. G. (2013) *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Third Edition. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. New York and London

## ***Used materials:***

Белоглазова Е.В., Кононова И.В., Барташова О.А.,  
Нильсен Е. А. (2015) *English for Academic Purposes*.

75 linking words for academic writing (+examples).

(n.d.) Retrieved from:

[https://master-academia.com/linking-words-academic-writing/  
/?expand\\_article=1](https://master-academia.com/linking-words-academic-writing/?expand_article=1)