

Summarizing an Article

Being able to explain something in your own words demonstrates that true learning has taken place. As Maruice Isserman (2003) argues, "You can read a dozen books about the cold war, but if you can't explain what you have learned to someone else in your own words, no real learning has taken place."

To be able to capture the heart of another author's book or article in a few sentences or short paragraph is also an important skill for writing research papers. A common problem in research papers is that students often go into too much detail to explain what another author has written. While it is important to build on the work of other authors, the research paper is to showcase your thoughts. Learning to summarize effectively will improve the overall quality of your research papers.

Directions for Activity

Step 1: Learn how to Summarize

To get an overview of how to write summaries, you should read the web site:

- "How to Avoid Plagiarism: Paraphrasing and Summarizing." *Plagiarism Tutorial*. n.d. Universities Library, University of Mississippi. <<http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/paraphrasing.php>>

Step 2: Summarize an Article

Apply what you learned in "How to Avoid Plagiarism: Paraphrasing and Summarizing" to an article, book, or quality website that you need to summarize.

Step 3: Get Feedback on Your Summary

One way to get feedback on your summary is to ask another student in the class or a trusted friend to read your summary. You can also see your instructor during his/her office hours or by appointment.

Four Generations of Teachers



THESE 3 GENERATIONS have taught literally thousands of youngsters in all grades. From left, Judy Liberacki Berg, Steve Berg, Lorain Berg, and at the forefront, their mother and grandmother, Mrs. Rachel Liberacki.

There was a time when following in the footsteps of the family trade was mandatory. A young man or woman simply had no choice but to become whatever the parents decreed -- be it butcher, baker or Indian chief.

Today, if a son or daughter "chooses" to learn a family trade or profession, it is a great compliment to the parents, the surest indication they have set a good example for their children.

When Steven Berg, grandson of Rachel Liberacki, decided to pursue higher education for the sake of becoming a better teacher, he must have gratified his grandmother's heart.

For 4 consecutive generations, there have been teachers in the Liberacki family.

Rachel's mother, Oma Wilcox, began the tradition, setting an example that Rachel later followed. For many years, Rachel was a teacher in the Unionville Schools, and her husband, the late Alex Liberacki, was a substitute teacher.

Of their 4 children, 3 continued the profession. Rita (Luks), Judy (Berg), and son Bruce Liberacki were all teachers in the Unionville or USA Schools.

It has only been since Bruce's death in July, 1983, that Unionville or USA Schools have not had a Liberacki family member on the teaching staff.

Both of Steve's parents, Lorain and Judy Berg, are teachers, and currently on staff in Essexville.

Mrs. Rachel Liberacki



Newspapers are often overlooked as a source for research papers. Yet, articles can be found in the Schoolcraft College Databases.

Another way to get feedback is through the Writing Fellows Program. To take advantage of this opportunity, visit a Writing Fellow in-person at the Learning Assistance Center.¹

Avoiding Plagiarism

A common misconception is that if you summarize an article as part of your research paper, all you have to do is list the source in your bibliography. This is incorrect. Unless you also provide some type of internal documentation next to the summary and a proper bibliographic reference, you are guilty of plagiarism.

References and Resources

“How to Avoid Plagiarism: Paraphrasing and Summarizing.” *Plagiarism Tutorial*. n.d. Universities Library, University of Mississippi. <<http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/paraphrasing.php>>

Isserman, Maurice. “Plagiarism: A Lie of the Mind.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 49.34 (2003): B12.

Pappas, Peter. “How to Teach Summarizing: A Critical Learning Skill for Students.” *Copy/Paste*. 9 November 2009. <<http://www.peterpappas.com/2009/11/how-teach-summarizing-essential-critical-learning-skill-students.html>>

¹ If you are not a Schoolcraft College Student, you can check to see if your college has a similar program. Such programs sometimes go under the name of Writing Center.



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