A summary is **a short statement that summarizes or informs the audience of the main ideas of a longer piece of writing**. Essentially, the summary is a short version of a longer text. The size of a summary can vary based on the type of writing, but most often they are no longer than a page.

**Steps and tips:**

* When writing a summary, remember that it should be in the form of a paragraph.
* A summary begins with an introductory sentence that states the text’s title, author and main point of the text as you see it.
* A summary is written in your own words.
* A summary contains only the ideas of the original text. Do not insert any of your own opinions, interpretations, deductions or comments into a summary.
* Identify in order the significant sub-claims the author uses to defend the main point.
* Copy word-for-word three separate passages from the essay that you think support and/or defend the main point of the essay as you see it.
* Cite each passage by first signaling the work and the author, put “quotation marks” around the passage you chose, and put the number of the paragraph where the passages can be found immediately after the passage.
* Using source material from the essay is important. Why? Because defending claims with source material is what you will be asked to do when writing papers for your college professors.
* Write a last sentence that “wraps” up your summary; often a simple rephrasing of the main point.

**Summarizing a story**

The strategy “Somebody- Wanted- But-So-Then” (SWBST) is used during or after reading. It provides a framework to use when summarizing the action of the story or historical event by identifying key elements. The SWBST strategy is also used to help understand plot elements such as conflicts and resolutions.

Somebody: Who is the main character of the narrative?

Wanted: What does the main character want or want to do?

But: What is the problem? Why can’t the main character get what she wants?

So: How does the main character solve the problem?

Then: What was the resolution?