

HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY

Here is a succinct summary from a web site:

Jane Austen - Emma

Posh bird, enjoys matchmaking. Initial success tempered by inability to understand repercussions. Romance arrives with Mr Knightly. Everyone gets married. Emma learns lesson. Job done.

Mikey G (...), February 23rd, 2004

<http://ilx.wh3rd.net/thread.php?msgid=4328588>

Accessed 8 November 2005

(Word count: 25)

Why is writing a summary an important skill?

- It will test your understanding of your reading of the work you have selected.
- It is useful for gathering information for essay writing or for doing research.

1. Your summary should be longer than the one cited above (1000 words).
2. First choose your text - it must be academic. Think about some of the books or articles you were asked to investigate in the first session of these Study Skills tutorials.
3. A summary is a short version of a longer written work. It must capture the important points of the longer piece. Express those main points in your own words; do not write in note form.
4. Use a dictionary, especially a specialist reference dictionary, to check terms with which you are unfamiliar, e.g.:

Bahn, P. 2001 *The Penguin archaeology guide*. London: Penguin .

Seymour-Smith, C. 1986 *Macmillan dictionary of anthropology*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Reference.

5. Identify the main arguments or sections of your original text. Make a list of these main points or arguments. You might find that making a diagram of boxes or a spider diagram is helpful. Write one or two sentences on the basis of each of these points. Try to focus on capturing the main arguments. Do not include illustrative examples.