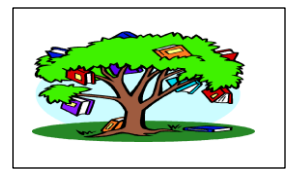


Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



The Summary Essay

A good summary essay will show the reader of the essay that you have grasped the major points, outlined the events, and understood the characters.

Purpose: to give the reader an overview and to condense material for usefulness

Perspective: third-person (*he, she, it, one, they...*)

Organization: in sections- chronological, by scene, or by point

Common Structure:

1. **Introduction:**
 - a. Attention-getter piques interest in the story, paper, etc.
 - b. Introduce the work, the author, and any background context
 - c. **Summary idea:** sum things up in a major “idea” and outline the major points
2. **Body (each paragraph):**
 - a. **Topic sentence:** introduces the point, scene, etc.
 - b. Take in details and write down generalities
 - c. Transition to the next section
3. **Conclusion:**
 - a. Bring together the components of the summary
 - b. Give an insight into the how and why the work was written.
 - c. Leave the reader with a statement that will lead them to read further.

Notes:

- A good thing to do is to read the first sentence of every paragraph to get perspective.
- A summary should only mention details that stand out as novel or intriguing.
- The major idea should dictate what goes into the summary
- Effective methods of summary include:
 - Define important terms.
 - Group particulars into general categories.
 - Look for “breaks and turns” to guide the divisions in the summary paper.
 - Highlight how people, events, ideas, etc. are related.
 - Be sure to use your own words.
 - Read the work.
 - Put it aside and explain it to yourself in your words.
 - Write it down in those words.
 - Be concise.