

Different Types of Paragraphs – The Summary Paragraph

A summary is a shortened, condensed version of an item such as an article, story, film, or chapter in a textbook. The purpose of a summary is to share the key ideas from the item with your reader. Summaries keep the same tone as the original piece and usually do not contain opinion. Summaries do not have a formal conclusion.

There are four steps to follow if you need to write a summary:

- Create a topic sentence using the “burrito” topic sentence method.
- Copy the topic sentence into a “real” sentence.
- Add a Fact Outline
- Write the summary using your Fact Outline.

The most difficult part of many writing tasks is writing the first sentence, the topic sentence. The “burrito” method, folding the paper into three sections or creating a box with three sections, helps you visualize all the pieces you will need to write a topic sentence for your summary.

1. Create a topic sentence using the “burrito” topic sentence method.

Identify	Verb	Finish thought

2. Make a “real” sentence. In this step, just copy the words from the three-part Burrito topic sentence to make it look like a real sentence.

3. Add a Fact Outline. To create a Fact Outline, simply make a column of dashes, or bullets. Between four to seven dashes is often enough. Next to each dash, list a fact that you will want to include in the summary. Make sure the fact fits the topic sentence that you have created. Keep the Fact Outline short – next to each dash put only two or three words. It should be just enough to jog your thinking when you write.

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4. Write the summary using the Fact Outline. Follow your Fact Outline, and yes, you may rearrange your points or add new facts. You can plan ahead to use transitions if they will help. But, it is best if you just follow your Fact Outline and write good, clear sentences. Summaries do not need a formal conclusion. Just following your Fact Outline will bring you to the end of your summary. If you force a conclusion, it might sound awkward. Also, formal conclusions include opinions – **you do not want an opinion in a summary.**

The Summary Paragraph – Burrito Topic Sentence and Fact Outline

Step 1.

Create a topic sentence using the "burrito" topic sentence method.

Identify	Verb	Finish thought
You can <i>identify</i> what you are summarizing in a variety of ways.	The verb is the action, or state of being, word of a sentence.	The final part of a topic sentence is easy if you just ask yourself these questions:
Okay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The book ▪ The film ▪ The article 	Beginners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ compares ▪ defines ▪ describes ▪ explains ▪ gives ▪ lists ▪ presents ▪ shows ▪ tells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the big idea? ▪ What is the big concept? ▪ What is the main idea of the item that I am summarizing?
Better <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Painless Public Speaking</i> ▪ <i>Forrest Gump</i> ▪ "Going Under the Light" 	For More Proficient Writers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ acknowledges ▪ adds ▪ advises ▪ answers ▪ asks ▪ asserts ▪ assures ▪ blames ▪ captures ▪ clarifies ▪ classifies ▪ confirms ▪ confronts ▪ confuses ▪ considers ▪ contrasts ▪ critiques ▪ defends ▪ demonstrates ▪ denounces ▪ depicts ▪ discourages ▪ encourages ▪ endorses ▪ entertains ▪ entices ▪ enumerates ▪ evaluates ▪ explores ▪ expresses ▪ features ▪ furnishes ▪ identifies ▪ illustrates ▪ invites ▪ judges ▪ mentions ▪ names ▪ offends ▪ offers ▪ praises ▪ predicts ▪ proposes ▪ provides ▪ recommends ▪ simplifies ▪ solves ▪ suggests ▪ supports ▪ teaches ▪ traces 	Keep in mind that this is just your topic sentence. You will be adding all of the facts in the body of your summary paragraph.
Best <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Painless Public Speaking</i> by Sharon Bower ▪ The movie <i>Forrest Gump</i> ▪ "Going Under the Light" from <i>Newsweek</i>, October 2, 1995 		

Step 2.

Make a "real" sentence. In this step, just copy the words from the three-part Burrito topic sentence to make it look like a real sentence.

Write the "real" sentence.

Step 3.

To create a Fact Outline, simply make a column of dashes, or bullets. Between four to seven dashes is often enough. Next to each dash, list a fact that you will want to include in the summary. Make sure the fact fits the topic sentence that you have created. Keep the Fact Outline short – next to each dash put only two or three words. It should be just enough to jog your thinking when you write.

Add your facts:

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Step 4.

Write the summary using the Fact Outline. Follow your Fact Outline, and yes, you may rearrange your points or add new facts. You can plan ahead to use transitions if they will help. But, it is best if you just follow your Fact Outline and write good, clear sentences. Summaries do not need a formal conclusion.

Just following your Fact Outline will bring you to the end of your summary. If you force a conclusion, it might sound awkward. Also, formal conclusions include opinions – you do not want an opinion in a summary.