

JOURNAL ARTICLE SUMMARY GUIDE

This document is intended to aid in the development of summaries of primary research articles in the social sciences. It may not work well for literature reviews, meta-analyses, or studies in other fields.

WHAT IS A SUMMARY

Summaries follow the structure of the original article: Introduction and Background, Methods, Results, and Discussion. They frequently require an APA citation. Summaries do not make use of direct quotes.

DIRECTIONS: TO COMPOSE YOUR SUMMARY, FOLLOW PROMPTS 1 TO 6. USE THE QUESTIONS AFTER EACH PROMPT TO GUIDE YOUR WRITING.

TO SUMMARIZE THE INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND SECTION

1. STATE THE RESEARCH QUESTION.

To do this, ask & answer: What were the researchers trying to discover or understand?

2. NOTE WHY THE RESEARCHER THOUGHT THE TOPIC WAS WORTH INVESTIGATING.

To do this, ask & answer: Why was the research necessary? Why is the research relevant at this time? What gap in knowledge or understanding were the researchers trying to fill?

3. STATE THE HYPOTHESIS OR HYPOTHESES TESTED IF GIVEN.

To do this, ask & answer: What result(s) did the researchers anticipate or expect?

TO SUMMARIZE THE METHODS SECTION

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE HYPOTHESIS WAS TESTED OR THE METHOD USED TO SEEK AN ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION.

To do this, ask & answer: What did the researchers do to test the hypothesis or to try to find the answer to the research question? CONSIDER THE POINTS BELOW

- a. Discuss the participants and what they experienced.

To do this, ask & answer: Who were the **participants** or who was enrolled in the study? How were the participants selected? What did the participants experience (treatment, conditions, intervention, etc.)? What were the major steps or the **procedure** of the experiment/study?

- b. State what information was gathered and how that information was collected.

To do this, ask & answer: What data or information was recorded or collected? What **materials** (e.g. surveys, interviews) and/or apparatuses (E.G. computers) were used to collect the data?

- c. Indicate how the collected data was analyzed.

This handout is **not intended** to replace instructor's directions. If the directions differ from those of your instructor, please do as your instructor asks.

To do this, ask & answer: What method of analysis was used to determine whether the results were significant?

TO SUMMARIZE THE RESULTS SECTION

5. DESCRIBE THE RESULTS AND INDICATE WHETHER THEY WERE SIGNIFICANT.

To do this, ask & answer:

- a. What were the major findings or discoveries of the study or experiment?
- b. Did the results support the researchers' hypothesis or hypotheses?
- c. Did the results suggest an answer to the research question and if so, what was that answer?

TO SUMMARIZE THE DISCUSSION SECTION

6. EXPLAIN THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE STUDY AND THE KEY IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS.

To do this, ask & answer:

- a. Are results consistent with previous studies or do they suggest something different?
- b. What strengths do the researchers see in how their study was conducted?
- c. What weaknesses do the researchers see in how their study was conducted?
- d. What do the researchers say can be done with what they have learned from the study?
 - Do the researchers suggest a change in policy or practice?
- e. Do the researchers indicate that more research should be done, if so, in what area(s)?

APA JOURNAL ARTICLE CITATION

JOURNAL ARTICLE WITH A DOI | PRINT, ONLINE, OR FROM A DATABASE

TEMPLATE

Author, A. A., & Author B. B. (Year of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, volume #(issue #, if available), page range. <https://doi.org/123a>

SAMPLE

Kossinets, G., & Watts, D.J. (2009). Origins of homophily in an evolving social network. *American Journal of Sociology*, 115(2), 405–450. <https://doi.org/10.1086/599247>