

Try to present the ideas in your summary in proportion to those in the original. For instance, if the author devotes one paragraph to each of four ideas, you might give one sentence to each idea. To avoid plagiarism, when you finish, compare your summary with the original; that is, make sure you have not just copied the phrasing and sentences of the original.

A summary differs from much other writing in that it should *not* contain your feelings or opinions—just the facts. Your job is to capture the essence of the original, with nothing added.

Following are two summaries of a student essay in Chapter 17, "Types of Essays, Part 2," Part A, of this book. Which do you think is the better summary, A or B? Be prepared to say specifically why.

### Summary A

(1) In the essay "E-Notes from an Online Learner," printed in Fawcett, *Evergreen*, Tenth Edition, student and mother Brenda Wilson contrasts her learning experiences in traditional and online classrooms. (2) Whereas Wilson's long commute to campus once made her late to class or anxious, she finds online classes more convenient because she can read lectures or submit coursework any time, from home. (3) Next, Ms. Wilson says that other students might prefer the energy of live class discussion, but she feels freer online, writing her thoughts with less self-consciousness. (4) Finally, she stresses that online students must be self-motivated, unlike regular students who can rely on professors to prod them or on the "group adrenaline rush [of] seeing other students hunched over their notebooks." (5) Less focused students might procrastinate and drop out. (6) Overall, Wilson prefers distance learning (238–239).

### Summary B

(1) This excellent essay is by Brenda Wilson, student. (2) I enjoyed reading about online learning because I have never taken a course online. (3) This year Ms. Wilson attended her history class dressed in dancing cow pajamas and fluffy slippers. (4) This was not a bizarre college ritual but part of the University of Houston's Distance Education Program. (5) Virtual courses are very different. (6) She has a job and a son, so she is very busy, like many students today. (7) Online classes are great for this type of student, more convenient. (8) Students have to motivate themselves, and Ms. Wilson has only the soft bubbling noise of her aquarium screen saver to remind her to work. (9) She ends by saying it is 12:14 A.M. and her cat is nuzzling her fluffy pink slippers. (10) I also liked her cat's name.

- The test of a good summary is how well it captures the original. Which better summarizes Ms. Wilson's essay, A or B?

- If you picked A, you are right. Sentence 1 states the author and title of the essay, as well as the name and edition of the book in which it appears. Sentence 1 also states the main idea of the original, which *contrasts* the author's experience of

traditional classes and virtual classes. Does any sentence in B state the main idea of the original essay? \_\_\_\_\_

- Compare the original with the two summaries. How many points of contrast does A include? B? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does each writer summarize the essay *in his or her own words*? If not, which sentences might seem plagiarized? \_\_\_\_\_
- Writer A once quotes Ms. Wilson directly. How is this shown? Why do you think the summary writer chose this sentence to quote? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do both summaries succeed in keeping personal opinion out? If not, which sentences contain the summary writer's opinion? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Note that summary writer A includes the source page number in parentheses at the end of the summarized material. On the other hand, writer B refers to Brenda Wilson but does not name her essay or the source in which it appears.

## PRACTICE 2

In a group with three or four other classmates, choose just one of the following essays to summarize: "Girl Heroes in the House" (Chapter 16, Part A); "The Day of the Dead" (Chapter 16, Part C); "Stopping Youth Violence: An Inside Job" (Chapter 17, Part D); or "Skin Deep" (Chapter 14, Part E). Read your chosen essay in the group, aloud if possible. Then each person should write a one-paragraph summary of it, referring to the checklist below (15–20 minutes).

Now read your finished summaries aloud to your group. How well does each writer briefly capture the meaning of the original? Has he or she kept out personal opinion? What suggestions for improvement can you offer? Your instructor may wish to have the best summary in each group read aloud to the whole class.

## PRACTICE 3

Flip through a copy of a current magazine: *Newsweek*, *People*, *Essence*, *Wired*, or another. Pick one article that interests you, read it carefully, and write a one- to three-paragraph summary of the article, depending on the length of the article. The points you include in your summary should reflect the emphasis of the original writer. Try to capture the essence of the article. Remember to give your source at the beginning, to keep out personal opinion, and to check your summary for plagiarism. Refer to the checklist.

## Plagiarism

Now read this passage from a third student's paper:

On film and television, violence begins and ends in a minute, and then the death is over. Teenagers killing each other across the country don't realize that death is "unalterable, final, and tragic" because they do not see its consequences on TV.

- Can you see why this passage is plagiarized (and why the student received a failing grade)?
  - Both the ideas and many of the words are clearly Prothrow-Stith's, yet the student never mentions her or her book. Four words from the original are placed in quotation marks, but the reader has no idea why. Instead, the student implies that all the ideas and words are his own. What exact words are plagiarized from the source? What ideas are plagiarized?
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- Revise this passage as if it were your own, giving credit to the original author and avoiding plagiarism.

## PRACTICE 4

Following are passages from two sources. Read each one, and then, as if you were writing a paper, quote two sentences from each, one directly quoting the author's words and one indirectly quoting the author's ideas. Review the boxed ways to introduce quotations and try several methods. Finally, write a brief summary of each passage. Check your work to avoid plagiarism.

### Source 1

In most cultures throughout history, music, dance, rhythmic drumming, and chanting have been essential parts of healing rituals. Modern research bears out the connection between music and healing. In one study, the heart rate and blood pressure of patients went down when quiet music was piped into their hospital coronary care units. At the same time, the patients showed greater tolerance for pain and less anxiety and depression. Similarly, listening to music before, during, or after surgery has been shown to promote various beneficial effects—from alleviating anxiety to reducing the need for sedation by half. When researchers played Brahms' "Lullaby" to premature infants, these babies gained weight faster and went home from the hospital sooner than babies who did not hear the music. Music may also affect immunity by altering the level of stress chemicals in the blood. An experiment at Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital found



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In the children's cancer ward in Villejuif, France, musicians play for a patient during music therapy.

that a single thirty-minute music therapy session could increase the level of salivary IgA, an immunoglobulin that protects against respiratory infections.

Institute of Noetic Sciences with William Poole.  
*The Heart of Healing*. Atlanta: Turner Publishing, 1993: 134. Print.

Direct quotation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Indirect quotation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

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Source 2

Assuming they reach maturity with consciousness intact, the current crop of teenagers will have spent years watching commercials. No one has done the numbers on what happens if you factor in radio, magazine, newspaper advertisements, and billboards, but today's teens probably have spent the equivalent of a decade of their lives being bombarded by bits of advertising information. In 1915, a person could go entire weeks without observing an ad. The average adult today sees three thousand every day.

James B. Twitchell, *Adcult USA*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996: 2. Print.

Direct quotation:

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Indirect quotation:

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Summary:

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PRACTICE 5

Following are four sources and four quotations from student papers. If the student has summarized, directly quoted, or indirectly quoted the source correctly, write C. If you believe the source is plagiarized, write P; then revise the student's work as if it were your own to avoid plagiarism.

- Does each student clearly distinguish between his or her ideas and the source's?
- Does each student give enough information so that a reader could locate the original source?

Source 1

"Binge drinking, according to criteria used in periodic surveys by the Harvard researchers, is defined as five or more drinks on one occasion for a man or four or more drinks on one occasion for a woman. Students who reported one or two such episodes in the two weeks preceding the survey were classified as occasional binge drinkers; those reporting three or more were considered frequent binge drinkers."

Okie, Susan. "Survey: 44% of College Students Are Binge Drinkers." *Washington Post* 25 Mar. 2002: A6. Print.