Guidelines: Summarizing

The following information is based on ideas in the text, Writing from Sources (Spatt 2003).

Definition: Summary

- “Your ability to present the related ideas of others completely, but briefly” (Spatt 2003, 2).

Defining characteristics of summarizing

- Comprehensive, concise, clear, and independent
- Records the ideas from a passage of some length
- Selects and condenses, recording only the main ideas
- May explain and interpret the original work
- Usually much shorter than the original text and a paraphrase
- Does not include analysis, which involves in-depth discussion, interpretation, making arguments and drawing of conclusions, implications, and consequences

Tips for writing summaries

- Read, then re-read the original work before you begin annotating the source
- Write a one sentence summary of each paragraph for works shorter than 10 pages
- Develop one sentence summary of the whole text
- Identify thesis and main supporting points
- Write, revise, and edit your notes for accuracy
- Always mention the name of the original work, author, and main idea
- Draft the summary, revise it, read it aloud, and the re-read the original again
- Do not repeat points or ideas even if they are repeated in the original
- Do not insert your own interpretations or opinion, but state the original author’s conclusions, viewpoint etc.

REFERENCES

www.leo.stcloutdstate.edu