

English 092 Unit 5.2

Summary Writing Assignment

Review the step-by-step guide on "How to Write a Summary" in Chapter 19 (page 273) in your textbook. (Chapter 12, 161, 5th Edition)

Then, in a single paragraph 150-200 words long, write a summary of the essay "Asphalt Jungle" by Dick Thompson. See Unit 5.4 for a copy of this essay.

Your audience for this summary is a college student who is writing a research essay on population growth. That student needs a quick explanation of Thompson's main points to know where Thompson stands and why. This summary will help the student to decide whether or not to read the whole essay.

Remember, summaries have nothing to do with you, so don't mention yourself or anything that you think about the article – your thoughts and feelings on the subject are irrelevant. You are simply distilling or transcribing another author's work and presenting it in a condensed form.

To do this assignment, you should first...

...take some time and read the essay. Then read it again, and underline or highlight the main idea of the essay (the thesis) and also underline or highlight the main point in each paragraph. Sometimes two paragraphs may have the same idea, sometimes there may be more than one main idea in a single paragraph – but don't confuse the main point of a paragraph with sub-points.

Remember, every essay usually has a thesis or main idea to it, and each paragraph has a main point that supports the thesis. Each paragraph also has sub-points that support the paragraph's main point. Your job is to isolate the one thing that Thomson wants us to know, along with the several ideas that support the main thing.

Then you should...

- craft an opening sentence that states the name of the essay being summarized, the name of the author of that essay, and the main point or argument of that essay.
- explain the main ideas of the essay that support or explain the main argument (that is, the main reasons the author thinks what he thinks). Do not use his phrasing – use your own
- give the main ideas in the same order in which they appear in the original essay
- connect the main ideas with appropriate transitions or linking expressions
- omit any examples, facts, or illustrations, or other minor details
- state all of Thompson's ideas in your own words and using your own sentence structures
- state the ideas as concisely as possible-avoid unnecessarily wordy or artificial expressions, repetition, words that mean more or less the same thing, and so on
- leave out any of your opinions about Thompson's arguments or writing style – also avoid saying things like “Thompson believes that Canadians have weak policies” – don’t mention Thompson after the introductory sentence, just write his points in your own words, like this: “Canadians do not have strong policies”

Don’t write things like “The author wants us to know that ...” As an expository writer, you never refer to I, we, me, us, our, etc. In other words, this summary is not about you at all.

- write clear, correct, and complete sentences
- present and format your assignment properly