



The Lantern English Co.
The Advanced Writer

The Advanced Essay Fast Track – Syllabus

Course Description: This class covers advanced essay forms in our standard eight-week format. Students are guided logically through the components of critical analysis, beginning with skills in paraphrasing and summarizing, followed by skills in critical reading and analyzing rhetoric. Throughout the second half of the class, students put these skills into practice by writing four different types of essays, all of which will demand strong critical thinking, thorough analysis, and a growing writing style. Students should be prepared to write one complete essay each week.

Course Outline:

Week One: Paraphrase of an Essay

Week Two: Summary of an Essay

Week Three: Critical Reading Skills

Week Four: Preparing for the Rhetorical Analysis

Week Five: Writing the Rhetorical Analysis

Week Six: Critical Evaluation

Week Seven: To Agree or Disagree

Week Eight: The Personal Narrative

Grading Information: All assignments will be graded using *The Advanced Writer* Grading Rubric and averaged to receive a final course grade.



The Advanced Essay Fast Track

Lesson Two: Summary of an Essay

SAMPLE LESSON

After mastering the art of paraphrase, we move on to the summary. The paraphrase and summary are actually quite similar in concept, so it is important to begin with an understanding of how they do, in fact, differ. Both forms of reference should express the main idea(s) of the original text. However, the paraphrase accomplishes this with a complete rewrite of the original, whereas a summary accomplishes this with a **simplified rewrite of the original**.

EXAMPLE –

- **Original text:** 987 words
- **Paraphrase:** rewritten in one's own words to express the main ideas of the original, 964 words
- **Summary:** rewritten in one's own words to express the main ideas of the original, 321 words

FEATURES OF PARAPHRASE & SUMMARY –

- Both the paraphrase and summary clearly demonstrate comprehension of the original text.
- A paraphrase expresses the main ideas(s) of the original text without simplification. A paraphrase is generally similar in length to the original. On the other hand, the summary is shorter than the original, typically one-third ($1/3$) to one-fourth ($1/4$) the length.
- Although more concise than a paraphrase, the summary still expresses the main idea(s) and most important details of the original.
- Both paraphrase and summary are written in your own words.
- Both paraphrase and summary remain objective and focus on the original writer's main ideas. Neither paraphrase nor summary include your analysis, interpretation, or opinions.

An acceptable summary typically comes in at one-third (1/3) to one-fourth (1/4) the length of the original. (So, if you have an original text of 1,200 words, you are aiming for a summary of about 300-400 words!) Although both the paraphrase and summary accomplish similar goals, the summary does so in a much more compact way.

Being able to summarize well is an invaluable skill in daily life as well as in academic and business settings. When you communicate with others in daily life about ideas you have come across, articles you have read, movies you have seen, etc., it would be impossible to give a word-for-word iteration of each of these things. There simply is not enough time in the day. For example, if your friend asks you about the movie you watched last night, he is expecting you to explain the most important information in five minutes. He doesn't want a two-hour narration.

In academic settings, summary can comprise an entire essay or, more often, be used as part of a complete essay. Summary is typically used in essay writing to inform readers about the ideas being presented (i.e. background information!) In addition, one must summarize ideas or texts before these can be compared, classified, discussed, analyzed, etc.

In business settings, summary skills are beneficial for such things as note-taking and communication. You may be listening to a speaker at a conference, for example, and need to jot down some important information for your own keeping or for sharing with a boss, colleagues, or clients later on. You would never be able to write down every word you heard, and reading through the entire transcript of the speech later on would be cumbersome (if you could get your hands on a transcript). Those you will be communicating with are expecting that you will be able to convey the most important information succinctly. Even if you are keeping the notes for yourself to study and learn from, you will want to be able to review the most important information quickly.

The purpose of the summary is to demonstrate your overall comprehension of a text (or movie, speech, performance, etc.) and ability to relay this understanding succinctly. The summary is ultimately written for two purposes: (1) to act as a substitute for the original source, allowing your readers to grasp the key ideas without having to read the *entire* original text; (2) [in academic settings] to demonstrate to an instructor that you fully understand an assigned text. In both cases, your main goal is to represent the original text accurately; thus personal analysis, interpretation, or opinions must be avoided.

Let's look again at the example presented in Lesson 1.

ORIGINAL TEXT:

The origins of cotton candy trace back centuries, all the way to Renaissance Italy. Back then, chefs melted and spun sugar manually. The process included them pulling the candy into thin strands using forks and draping it over broom handles. These hand-spun candies were not only labor-intensive but also expensive. However, the cotton candy we know and love today didn't make its debut till the 19th century. Who introduced this sugary treat? Believe it or not, a dentist named Dr. William Morrison created cotton candy. In 1897, Dr. Morrison teamed up with candy maker, John C. Wharton, and invented a machine that heated sugar in a spinning bowl, which had several tiny holes in it. The sugar in the hot, spinning bowl caramelized and made its way through the holes turning the melted sugar into light strands. They called this sugary treat "Fairy Floss." In 1904, the two inventors introduced their machine and fun snack at the St. Louis World's Fair and sold 68,000 boxes over 6 months for 25¢ each (\$6.75 in today's money). The treat was so popular, a candy store purchased the electric machine and started selling the fairy floss just a year later. In 1949, Gold Medal Products created the first factory-made cotton candy machine. This helped cotton candy production become what it is today! **(219 words)**

Reference: "How Did Cotton Candy Get Started?" *Gold Medal*, <https://www.gmpopcorn.com/resources/blog/how-did-cotton-candy-get-started>.

SUMMARY:

Though well-known today, cotton candy has not always been popular. Originally a handmade confection in Renaissance Italy, cotton candy was not earnestly made until 1897, when dentist Dr. William Morrison and candy maker John C. Wharton designed a sugar-spinning machine. After selling 68,000 boxes of cotton candy at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, the men sold the machine to a candy store. Fifty years later, Gold Medal Products designed a factory-made machine, helping cotton candy become a popular treat. **(80 words)**

HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL SUMMARY –

To begin your summary, follow similar steps as for writing a paraphrase. However, the obvious challenge of writing a summary is the need for simplification. How do you express the main ideas of an original text in one-third or one-fourth of the words? Follow these steps to write a successful summary.

1. **First, thoroughly read and study the original text.** When you read it, get a feeling for the author's style, tone and mood, and identify the main idea(s) expressed.
2. **Consider the author's main point. What is his thesis or purpose?** Throughout the entire text, what is the overarching message you receive as a reader? This main point is ultimately what you will be trying to convey in your summary.

3. **Choose several key ideas to express in your summary.** Remember, you will not be able to discuss everything from the original in your summary. A summary must focus only on the most important information and details. Marking up the text can be useful for this step. Mark areas of the original text which you think will be important to your summary. Then, mark areas of the original that will not be as necessary and need not be included in your summary.
4. **You may find it helpful to first write a paraphrase of the text and then simplify your paraphrase,** but not all students prefer this method, especially if the original text is long. If you use this method, look at the paraphrase for extraneous details that can be omitted and phrases that can be simplified.

Assignment 2A: Read the following three selections presented in Lesson 1. Then, write a summary for each one, as shown in the first example set of this lesson.

ORIGINAL TEXT 1: Brain scientists say that in order to speak a language as well as a native speaker, children must begin to study the language by age 10. A 2018 study found that this ability to more easily learn a language lasts until about age 17 or 18 – which is longer than previously thought – but then begins to decline.

Language immersion programs . . . represent one way to teach foreign language to children earlier. Research has shown that immersion students in Canada score higher in reading literacy than non-immersion students.

Research also shows immersion programs in general have many educational and cognitive benefits, as well as cultural, economic and social benefits both locally and globally. They have also been shown to be cost-effective.

Reference: Stein Smith, Kathleen. “Foreign Language classes becoming more scarce.” *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 6 February 2019, <https://www.amacad.org/news/foreign-language-classes-becoming-more-scarce>.

ORIGINAL TEXT 2: ICÔNE, a new office complex in Belval Luxembourg designed by Foster + Partners has broken ground. The 18,800 square-metre office building, filled with light and greenery, encourages a spirit of co-creation and collaboration. Its flexible layout addresses the need for safe working environments and the changes to the workplace that will emerge in the future. It also references the rich industrial heritage of Belval, revitalising the area by making a positive contribution to the site and its surroundings.

Reference: “ICÔNE breaks ground in Belval.” *Foster + Partners*, 1 June 2020, <https://www.fosterandpartners.com/news/archive/2020/06/icone-breaks-ground-in-belval/>.

ORIGINAL TEXT 3: This model is based on many sketches of a flying apparatus by Leonardo da Vinci. It features two wings, each with two sections that move independently, a rudder, and a “pilot” that pedals as the wings move and moves its arms together with the rudder. Powered by a single PF M Motor, it's quite impressive, but it doesn't fly – just like da Vinci's original designs.

The primary challenge was cramming all the mechanical and electric parts inside the narrow body. Because the model was never built in da Vinci's time, the colors used in the model are simply a guess, based on the assumption that da Vinci would have worked with wood, canvas, and metal.

Reference: Kmiec, Pawet “Sariel.” *Incredible LEGO Technic: Cars, Trucks, Robots, & More!* No Starch Press, San Francisco, 2015.

THE SUMMARY ESSAY –

Just as the paraphrase of an essay is structured a little bit differently than a standard paraphrase, so too is a summary essay. When you write a summary essay, you must consider a few other steps and include some additional elements. After you have read the original text and identified the main idea and most important details, follow these steps below.

1. When you have a clear understanding of the main idea of the text and the information in each part of the original, as well as a list of the key ideas you want to discuss in your summary, **develop your own thesis statement and draft a rough outline.** Jot down a short overview for each section of your outline. **This step is crucial for summarizing a long text, article, or speech. Just as with a paraphrase, you should not follow the original structure, merely simplifying each individual paragraph. Think about the original text as a whole and summarize the most important information.**
2. **Write an introduction.** The introduction should include the name of the author, the title of their work, and some background information about the author, if needed. Your introduction should also include your thesis – i.e. your statement of what the author's main point is.
3. **In the main body paragraphs, state the ideas you have chosen to focus on while reading the text.** Expand on them by including specific examples or quotations from the original text. Include important information only and avoid describing minor, insignificant points.
4. **Just as with a paraphrase, your summary should use third-person voice, not first-person voice.**
5. **A conclusion paragraph is only needed if specifically requested by the teacher. Most often, after you have summarized the main ideas in the original text, your essay is finished.**

REMEMBER –

Think of a summary this way: if you watch a movie, ideally, you should have paid attention enough to be able to tell your parents or a friend about the movie after it is over. What is the movie about? Who are the characters? What is the setting? What is the main point, or what are the plot twists? Etc. However, suppose you watched the movie while working on a project or half-doing. You would not retain much of the movie and would not be able to truly explain it to someone else. Instead, you might have to go back and skip through sections of the movie, while jotting down a few notes which you would later relay to your parents or friend. This does not demonstrate a true appreciation or understanding of the movie; rather, it is a haphazard attempt to figure out some answers to the questions.

A summary should reflect that you have read the original text thoroughly enough (perhaps numerous times) to express the main ideas in your own words. A summary should never read like a play-by-play of key points, with a lot of omission. A successful summary is an outflow of your true understanding of the original source.

FINAL NOTES –

The introduction of a summary essay is typically one paragraph. Within the introduction, you must include a one-sentence thesis statement that sums up the main idea of the text. **Remember, as a summary essay has nothing to do with your opinion, this thesis is not *your* main point but the main point of the source. You should not use a quote from the original as your thesis. You must write the statement yourself.**

Within the introduction, you should also introduce the author and the source being summarized (the signal!). In some cases, it may also be valuable to provide background information about the author or the source being summarized.

Example Thesis Statement:

“In his essay 'Over the River and Through the Woods,' author James Havern makes the case that traveling for the holidays and filling up one's schedule with constant social and family events is not the best use of one's time for celebration.”

The body of the summary will be one or more paragraphs. These paragraphs both **paraphrase and condense the original source**. Within these paragraphs, be sure to include the most important points while omitting extraneous details. Do not omit all of the author's examples, but do choose wisely on what you include. The details you include should bring interest to your summary and help to express the main idea clearly. **Remember also that no part of your summary essay should include your own ideas, examples, opinions, or interpretations.**

Finally, there is typically no conclusion for a summary essay. As stated above, when you have finished summarizing the original text, the summary essay is finished. You need not add a concluding paraphrase unless your teacher specifically instructs you to do so.

Assignment 2B: For the text (or the portion) you paraphrased last week, write a summary essay. As we instructed you in Lessons 1 to choose something between 500-800 words, your summary should be between 125-200 words on the low end and 166-266 words on the high end. (If you paraphrased only a portion of a longer essay, do not summarize the entire essay—just summarize the portion you paraphrased!)

Ensure that your essay is formatted properly, according to the instructions provided in Lesson 1. Remember to cite your source following the summary in an appropriate MLA Work Cited list. Use the editing checklist below to ensure that you have written a successful summary.

Editing Checklist:

- Have I signaled the original author and the title of his work in my summary's introduction?
- Have I included a clear thesis in my summary's introduction?
- Have I avoided first-person voice and instead used third-person voice?
- Do I understand the main idea and most important details of the original? And have I been able to express those in my summary?
- Did I put the original away when I wrote my summary, to ensure that I avoided plagiarism or identical copying of the original structure?
- Is my summary one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) to one-fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) to the length of the portion I paraphrased?
- Have I applied attention to using variation in my word choices, sentence structure, and voice, so that I am expressing the author's main idea(s) while still using my personal writing style?
- Have I formatted my summary according to MLA guidelines?
- Have I properly cited the original reference in a Work Cited list following the summary?