

# Comcast II: Summarizing, Breaking it down

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## Slide 1

Welcome to the second Comcast Summarizing II Breaking it Down.

## Slide 2

In this module we will be covering the following:

I'll show you an example of a simple summary taken from an original text

Then I'll go through the steps to summarize

## Slide 3

Take a minute please, pause the Comcast and read the original text.

I've highlighted what I think are the most germane ideas in this text: King copied another student's work for his doctoral dissertation; most academics agree that he borrowed other people's words for a number of his papers; and, the tone ideas for part of his famous "I have a dream" speech weren't his either; and, finally, the author puts plagiarism into perspective by telling his readers that he was still a great and wonderful man and that plagiarism shouldn't take anything away from him in any way.

So now I have collected the main ideas and rewritten it in my own words and then cited it appropriately.

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Here are the four steps, simply, to summarizing:

1. Read and understand the original text
2. Highlight the main points
3. Rewrite the main points
4. And cite the original author

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Reading and understanding the original text is perhaps the hardest part of the process, especially for a new university student. The vocabulary is often new and difficult, and students, when they are new to a subject, may not have the common knowledge of the field, so the basic terms and concepts are difficult to grasp quickly. Of course the best thing to do about difficulties in reading is to read more, that way you will increase your vocabulary in the new field through contextual understanding.

Here are a few things that can help your reading immediately:

Look up words that you don't know. If you don't understand a key word then you won't understand the meaning of the whole sentence. So have that dictionary, either an on-line dictionary or a paper one, handy. A specialized dictionary in your major is a great idea because it will save you time throughout your degree.

Look for the writing patterns; is the author trying to compare and contrast two things or argue an issue or just give information? In the western culture our main learning process is to put forth an argument give evidence to support it. Your ability to recognize the argument and judge the evidence is invaluable in every college of every North American university, so take time to learn about how to be good at analyzing arguments.

Another way of sorting out a reading is to make an outline of it – deconstruct it. You had to do outlines in school to do your papers, so now make an outline to read other people’s papers.

Reading out loud helps some people understand a piece of literature better, as does reading it over at least twice.

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Highlight the text either with highlighter or pencil and write things in the margin that remind you about how you relate to something, like “Uncle Bernie’s bankruptcy”. This is called active reading and the general consensus is that the more you interact with a reading the better retention you will have of it.

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You might think that the rewriting is the hardest part of the summarizing, but actually the reading and the understanding of the original text is the hardest. Once you understand a passage of the writing really well you can summarize it fairly easily into your own words. Remember to look at your summary to make sure that you have used only your own words except for the key words of the original text. You need to use a different structure for your paragraph and sentence as well. A final reminder is to remember not to put a spin or bias into your summary. The summary should be a representative of the original author’s views.

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Of course, you are going to cite the original source because what you have summarized was not your idea. You might also want to start on your bibliography as you go. Word for Windows has a great tool – look for it under the reference tab to help you with your bibliography. It’s infuriating when you have a perfect quote for your paper but you have to take it out because you can’t find the source you got it from.

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So to review the steps to summarizing:

First you must read and understand the original text. Most of the time you spend in writing a paper should be in reading

Highlight the main points and interact with the text by writing in the margins

Rewrite in your own words. Check that your summary isn’t written too closely to the original

Cite the author.

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This is the reference for this module.

Slide 11

Thank you for listening and watching this module on how to summarize.