

# NOTES ON...

## SUMMARY V. ANALYSIS

Understanding the difference between these two aspects of writing, and knowing when to use which, can help clarify your argument and make your paper original, thought-provoking, and effective.

### In general:

An effective paper almost always proves something to the reader, usually by presenting and supporting an argument (thesis). A solid argument delves into the deeper significance of a source or sources. Going deep means not simply repeating what the sources say, but, rather, making your own point about their message. This is the main difference between *summary* and *analysis*.

### Summary:

A summary describes and informs the reader of the source's Five Ws, or whichever of these 5 are relevant to the paper's argument:

1. Who (who is/was involved?)
2. What (what event or topic is covered in the source(s)?)
3. When (time period or chronological order)
4. Where
5. Why (what was the cause or reason for what happened?)

Use summary when you introduce the text or other source on which you will base your argument, or to present the main points of any source.

### Words associated with summary:

Synopsis, paraphrase, recap, in short, in a nutshell, an abstract (as in a scientific abstract), [This book/author] states, is about,...

Summary and analysis go hand in hand. Don't forget that after or as you present a source to the reader, you need to help the reader understand its significance. Relating your summary back to your main point, or thesis, is called analysis. Flip this handout over for details!

# NOTES ON...

## SUMMARY V. ANALYSIS

### Analysis:

Analysis offers an interpretation or explanation of a source. Analysis should relate a summary back to the topic at hand and the paper's main argument.

An analysis can point out:

1. Relationships, trends, patterns
2. Roles of people, places, objects, situations
3. Connections between texts, and the significance of these connections (also known as synthesis)
4. Consequences or results of events, decisions and processes
5. Causes and their effects
6. Advantages and disadvantages/ gains and losses
7. Strengths and weaknesses

Thorough analysis should also propose the significance of any of the above elements.

### Words associated with analysis:

[The author/source] implies, means, insinuates, indicates, proves, raises questions about,...

### Pointers:

- Make sure to analyze any time you cite or quote from a source.
- If you are unsure how to incorporate analysis, review your main points and ask yourself, "So what?" Your answer is probably the analysis you were missing!

### References:

[http://comptalk.fiu.edu/analysis\\_v.htm](http://comptalk.fiu.edu/analysis_v.htm)  
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/summary.html>  
[http://www.mtsu.edu/uwc/Handouts/WID/WID\\_1b.doc](http://www.mtsu.edu/uwc/Handouts/WID/WID_1b.doc)

# NOTES ON...

## SUMMARY V. ANALYSIS

Understanding the difference between these two aspects of writing, and knowing when to use which, can help clarify your argument and make your paper original, thought-provoking, and effective.

### In general:

An effective paper almost always proves something to the reader, usually by presenting and supporting an argument (thesis). A solid argument delves into the deeper significance of a source or sources. Going deep means not simply repeating what the sources say, but, rather, making your own point about their message. This is the main difference between *summary* and *analysis*.

### Summary:

A summary describes and informs the reader of the source's Five Ws, or whichever of these 5 are relevant to the paper's argument:

6. Who (who is/was involved?)
7. What (what event or topic is covered in the source(s)?)
8. When (time period or chronological order)
9. Where
10. Why (what was the cause or reason for what happened?)

Use summary when you introduce the text or other source on which you will base your argument, or to present the main points of any source.

### Words associated with summary:

Synopsis, paraphrase, recap, in short, in a nutshell, an abstract (as in a scientific abstract), [This book/author] states, is about,...

Summary and analysis go hand in hand. Don't forget that after or as you present a source to the reader, you need to help the reader understand its significance. Relating your summary back to your main point, or thesis, is called analysis. Flip this handout over for details!

# NOTES ON...

## SUMMARY V. ANALYSIS

### Analysis:

Analysis offers an interpretation or explanation of a source. Analysis should relate a summary back to the topic at hand and the paper's main argument.

An analysis can point out:

8. Relationships, trends, patterns
9. Roles of people, places, objects, situations
10. Connections between texts, and the significance of these connections (also known as synthesis)
11. Consequences or results of events, decisions and processes
12. Causes and their effects
13. Advantages and disadvantages/ gains and losses
14. Strengths and weaknesses

Thorough analysis should also propose the significance of any of the above elements.

### Words associated with analysis:

[The author/source] implies, means, insinuates, indicates, proves, raises questions about,...

### Pointers:

- Make sure to analyze any time you cite or quote from a source.
- If you are unsure how to incorporate analysis, review your main points and ask yourself, "So what?" Your answer is probably the analysis you were missing!

### References:

[http://comptalk.fiu.edu/analysis\\_v.htm](http://comptalk.fiu.edu/analysis_v.htm)  
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/summary.html>  
[http://www.mtsu.edu/uwc/Handouts/WID/WID\\_1b.doc](http://www.mtsu.edu/uwc/Handouts/WID/WID_1b.doc)