

## Summary of a Critical Source

**Purpose:** To practice careful reading and summary of secondary sources.

**Objectives:** As a result of this assignment, you will be able to read a source more critically, identify a source's main idea and supporting ideas, synthesize the source's ideas, choose and rank (evaluate) points to include in your writing, paraphrase properly, and cite your source correctly (MLA format).

**The Task:** In this essay you are to write an extended summary of either "Befriending Ogres and Wood Elves" or "Virtual Friendship and the New Narcissism." (Choose the reading that corresponds with the topic (computer gaming or social networking) that you would like to explore in your next paper.) In research essays, you must often summarize sources in order to contextualize and provide perspective. You would most likely not summarize a source in a research paper to the extent that I am asking you to do here. This more in-depth summary allows you a chance to practice the steps of summary more carefully; you will see how choosing and evaluating the ideas you want to include require critical reading and thinking skills, and how creating an effective summary (one that looks at "why," not just "what," and that offers synthesis) is an analytical activity.

**To write the essay:**

Refer carefully to the "Summary" handout, and follow the "Strategies for Making Summaries More Analytical." You need to start by choosing and rereading the critical source through once in its entirety and then once again, looking for main ideas. Apply the strategies we've discussed as you annotate the text and take notes on what the main ideas of the text are. You will need to hand in these notes with your essay. You will most likely need to read the source at least three times and take substantial notes in order to write an effective summary.

Looking at your notes, start outlining and drafting a summary of the critical source. This summary should be approximately 1½ pages long, typed and double-spaced (follow formal essay format). In the beginning of the essay, you need to mention the title and author of the source. The summary must include one to two quotes that are documented properly according to MLA format. Your quotes can be no longer than one sentence each. This summary must focus in on the most important ideas of the text (omit minor details) and it must be written in your own words and style (except for the one or two quotes you take from the text). Remember our discussions of and practice with paraphrasing. Your tone should be objective and academic; you are not evaluating the source. Again, look back to the "Summary" handout to get a sense of how to craft an essay that is not simply a list.

In addition to providing in-text citations for your quotes you need to provide an MLA style works cited page, listing the source.

**Rubric:** Look to the course rubric. I will pay particular attention to the accuracy of your summary (can you distinguish between the main idea, major supporting points, and minor details?), the effectiveness of your organization (does it look at the relationship of the author's ideas or have you written a list?), the effectiveness of your quotes and paraphrases, and the effectiveness of your tone.

**First Draft:** Put date here. **Also, bring the notes you took on the source.**

**Final Draft:** Put date here. Send to turnitin. Include first draft, and all notes taken while preparing the essay. You must hand in notes (those I've already seen as well as any new notes) with this final draft.