**How to write a summary: Two methods**

**Sample summary**

**Scroll down to see sample summaries written by Professor Harris and Professor Wu!**

**Method One:**

When writing a summary, there’s always a danger of

**staying too close to the author’s own words**.

**Without meaning to, you may even copy them exactly or rely on the same sentence structure**.

Both are forms of the same thing, really–the awful P. Word.

If you’re struggling to write your summary (DB 10), let’s review a new approach that may help.

To help you use your own words:

First, read many times the article you're writing about for your Reflective Annotated Bibliography.  Look up unfamiliar words.

Take out your notebook and write out by hand.

Respond in complete sentences to the following basic journalistic questions:

**who** (is the author)?

**what** (is the title of the article?)

**when** (was it published–the date)?

**where** (was it published–the name of the newspaper, etc.)?

**Now revisit “what”?**

**what** (is the author’s main idea or thesis)?

**what** (are 2-4 of the author’s supporting ideas)?

**why** (was the article written, for what purpose, for what audience)?

**how** (does the author convey his/her message–personal anecdotes? scientific studies?  interviews? If interviews, what kind of people does the author interview?)

Once you have a set of complete sentences, you can delete the questions. Now add sentences, re-order sentences–revise!–to make the whole paragraph flow**.**

**Method Two (more on this method below, with examples):**

As you read and reread, do take notes of the following (as you did for DB 10):

Include:

1. Author’s full name, full title of article
2. Author’s main idea or thesis
3. 3-4 Supporting ideas

**Do NOT include**:

Your own opinions

Quotations

**More on Summaries:**

**Purpose of writing a summary? Whose language do you use?**

Occasions where you’d need to write a summary?

In your school life? Some articles online or databases have “abstracts” (summary)

In your professional life? Nurses’s report/doctor’s report/minutes (summary) for a meeting/police report

Due Thurs. Dec. 1– DB #10, a summary of your chosen article

To write a strong summary you must understand what the author is saying.

How do you go about this?

**Read, reread, reread again. How many times?**

**Fifteen!**

**Once is NOT enough.**

You need to be so familiar with the author’s ideas that you can discuss them with a friend *without looking at the article.*

That’s the language you want to use in a summary.

*You want to write it in your own words, without looking at the article.*

1. **What goes in a summary? Reading, Rereading, Taking Notes.**

As you read and reread, do take notes of the following (as you did for DB 10):

Include:

1. Author’s full name, full title of article
2. Author’s main idea or thesis
3. 3-4 Supporting ideas

**Do NOT include**:

Your own opinions

Quotations

**C) Important Template Sentence to get started**:

In his opinion article “Pandemics Kill Compassion, Too,” *New York Times* journalist David Brooks claims that “x.” (x = author’s thesis)

Useful verbs to use for announcing author’s thesis and supporting ideas:

claims that, argues that, writes that, observes that, believes that

1. **Author’s Main idea or thesis:**

Brooks claims that pandemics, unlike other kinds of natural disasters and floods, rip apart the social fabric of human relations; instead of coming together, people behave very badly toward one another.

**3-5 Supporting Ideas or Examples:**

–He studies historical examples of pandemics in the past to make his point.

–For example, he observes that during the 1884 cholera epidemic in Italy the divisions deepened between the underclasses and the upper class.

–About the flu epidemic of 1918 he writes that people behaved so badly that no one wanted to write or talk about it afterward; Brooks believes people felt so much shame and that’s why very little is written about it.

–In all these past epidemics, according to Brooks, one group of people put aside their own fears and behaved heroically–health care workers.

–Solution (to problem): He believes that we should take medical workers as an example and fight against the “moral disease” that always accompanies a pandemic.

Put it all together:

My example:

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**ENG 1101-Co**

**December 1, 2022**

**Source Entry One, Citation and Summary**

**Part 1: MLA citation**

Brooks, David. “Pandemics Kill Compassion, Too.” 13 March 2020 *The New York Times.* The New York Times. Web 12 March 2020.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/opinion/pandemic-coronavirus-compassion.html?searchResultPosition=2

**Part 2: Summary/Abstract**

In his opinion article “Pandemics Kill Compassion, Too,” *New York Times* journalist David Brooks claims that pandemics, unlike other kinds of natural disasters like hurricanes and floods, rip apart the social fabric of human relations; instead of coming together, people behave very badly toward one another. He studies examples of pandemics in the past to make his point. For example, he observes that during the 1884 cholera epidemic in Italy the divisions deepened between the underclasses and the upper class. About the flu epidemic of 1918 he writes that people acted so ugly toward each other that no one wanted to write or talk about it afterward; Brooks believes that people felt so much shame about their behavior that they never wanted to speak or write about that time. In all these past epidemics, according to Brooks, one group of people put aside their own fears and behaved heroically–health care workers. As a way to offer a solution to the social decay that pandemics bring on, Brooks believes we should take medical workers as an example and fight against the “moral disease” that often accompanies the physical disease.

**Professor Wu’s Example**

**Reflective Annotated Bibliography**

**Introduction**

My research question is:  How has the CV pandemic exacerbated Anti-Asian racism?

This topic interests me because I am Chinese American.  When the pandemic began in NYC in March, I witnessed New Yorkers treat Asians as if they were dangerous infectious people.  President Trump is not helping the situation.  He continues to refer to the virus as the “Chinese virus” or the “King Fu Flu” or the “Chinese Plague” spreading divisive sentiment and encouraging prejudice and racism.  I know that the virus was first detected in Wuhan China, but the truth is that the virus effects all people across all racial, income, and national divides.  I read news reports that Asian Americans are being targeted and even violently attacked.  I want to find out how Asian Americans are defending themselves against these hurtful verbal and physical attacks.  I want to find out how the Asian community – all Asian Americans not just Chinese in America — is banding together to combat the prejudice.   Also because I am a teacher and a parent, I want to know how Asian American youths are experiencing prejudice.  Furthermore, I might research how the pandemic has effected Asian and Chinese businesses. (183 words)

**Source Entry #1**

**Part 1: MLA Citation**

Yang, Andrew. “We Are Not the Virus But We Can Be Part of the Cure.” 1 Apr 2020 *The Washington Post*. The Washington Post. Web. 2 Apr 2020. [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/01/andrew-yang-coronavirus-discrimination/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/01/andrew-yang-coronavirus-discrimination/)

**Part 2: Summary**

Former US presidential candidate **Andrew Yang writes** a Washington Post op-ed about the racism and the stigma that Asian Americans are facing as a result of the CV. **Yang explains** that the economic downturn resulting in job insecurity and financial stress has caused some Americans to mistakenly blame the Asian community for causing the pandemic. **Yang writes**, “People are hurting. They look up and see someone who is different from them, whom they wrongly associate with the upheaval of their way of life.” **He points out** that 17% of American doctors are Asians presently fighting on the front lines of the war against Co-vid virus. **He ends his essay by** encouraging Asian Americans to show their patriotism by volunteering, donating, helping neighbors, and actively joining in the effort to fight the crisis. **Yang calls upon** his fellow Asian-Americans to “[d]emonstrate that we are part of the solution. We are not the virus, but we can be part of the cure” (Yang par 6).

(160 words)

**Part 3A: Reflection with quotes and my opinion**

Yang provides a solution to the problem of scapegoating Asians for the CV spread, **but I have a few questions** about his argument. He taps into the Chinese model minority myth by stating the fact that 17% of doctors working on the CV battleground are Asian Americans. He uses this fact to prove that Asians are integral and contributing members of American society, but he seems to assume that all Asian Americans are doctors or engineers or super professionals. While Asians do take pride in their achievements in America, **I would ask Yang** doesn’t this perpetuate tribal politics and sense of superiority? His solution also asks Asians to show their “American-ness,” their patriotism, but aren’t we Americans? **I would ask Yang:** Why do we have to prove that we are American? Distrust and racism are undercurrents that run deep in our society. America needs to usher in a new era of complete acceptance: Americans are Americans period. This pandemic is exposing fault lines in how we view each other. We need to make our diverse national identity a source of unity and strength. In this time of pandemic, we don’t need to be fighting each other; we need to be fighting the real enemy: the virus.

(206 words)

**Part 3B: Rhetorical / Genre Analysis**

Yang’s **audience** is Asian Americans. In his title he uses “We.” His **purpose** is to call on his fellow Asian Americans to be visible in the effort to combat the pandemic. His **writing style** is clear and effective: The essay is short and he makes his point clear. Yang’s **genre choice of the** op-editorialis an effective way to call for action. He uses his own life experience in the opening scene, the personal narrative of the family grocery trip and getting “accusatory” looks from the locals. Because he can show his own experience as an Asian American, he can effectively reach other Asians. Indeed Yang has strong **credibility** because he is a successful entrepreneur and the first Asian American to run for president. All this gives him credibility with the Asian community and with all of America. Publishing his op-ed in The Washington Post gives credibility because this is a national newspaper with an educated readership. It is current information because the date is April 2020.

(167 words)

**Part 4: Notable Quotables (with author name and page)**

“People are hurting. They look up and see someone who is different from them, whom they wrongly associate with the upheaval of their way of life” **(Yang par 4).**

“Some 17 percent of U.S. doctors are Asian and rushing to the front lines” **(Yang par 8).**

“We Asian Americans need to embrace and show our American-ness in ways we never have before. . . . We should show without a shadow of a doubt that we are Americans who will do our part for our country in this time of need” **(Yang par 9).**

“Demonstrate that we are part of the solution. We are not the virus, but we can be part of the cure” **(Yang par 9).**