# The Robert Gillespie ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTRE
# Six Effective Tips to Write a Summary

A summary presents the major ideas from a text while reducing its length.

When you write a summary, you may find it tempting to combine various parts of the text. However, this isn't the best strategy. To write an effective summary, you can rearrange the order of the points and remove minor details.

Use these six tips to write a summary.

**Summary checklist:**
- Write in full sentences
- Shorten the original text
- Use your own words and sentence structure
- Maintain the author's intent

1. **Identify the sections of the text**
   Find the text's thesis and main ideas. Breaking down the text into sections helps you to understand the author's flow and organization.

2. **Distinguish between major and minor details**
   How do the details connect back to the thesis and main ideas? Remember, a summary is a shortened version of the original text. You'll need to focus on the need-to-know information.

3. **Remove minor details and examples**
   Condense the text, but beware of misrepresenting the author's ideas. Sometimes omitting details can change the spirit of the text.

4. **Pay attention to transition words**
   Transition words can signal emphasis and guide you through the logic of the text's argument. Look out for words like "however", "therefore", and "thus".

5. **Re-order the ideas as needed**
   You don't have to maintain the exact same order as the author. Re-organize your points so that your summary is logical.

6. **Reserve your opinions**
   Your analysis of the text is important, but it does not belong in a summary. Remember, a summary is a condensed form of the author's ideas and intent. Save your opinions of the text for a discussion.

**Looking for more resources for summarizing?**

Book an appointment at the RGASC to get feedback on your writing and to discuss summarizing strategies: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/appointments-undergraduate.

Improve your writing process and get a CCR notation by participating in the Elements of Academic Writing workshops. Learn more: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/elements-academic-writing-workshop-series.