

A summary is strong when it can be understood by someone who has not read the work. When writing a summary, it is important to clarify that these ideas belong to the author, so you must mention the author's name and the title of the work being summarized. Before beginning your summary, ask yourself the following two questions:

- What is the author's most important point?
- How does the author support the most important point?

Depending on the length of the work, the author may be making more than one point. The longer the work, the more points the author is probably making. If you feel that your source text fits this category, you may want to ask yourself these two additional questions:

- Does the author make point(s) that are subordinate to the author's important point?
- How are the subordinate point(s) related to the most important point?

Once you have answered these questions, your summary may be structured in this manner:

In [Title of work], [Author's name] writes [most important point]. [Author] uses [evidence #1]. [Evidence #1] supports [most important point] because.... [The author] makes [subordinate point #1]. [Subordinate point #1] relates to [most important point] because.... [Reminder of the author's most important point or the author's concluding idea].

While a five-to-eight sentence summary is a good aim, the amount of subordinate points or pieces of evidence will depend on the length or complication of the text.



Here is an example of how you can create a summary of the article “Social Media: The Case for Deactivation” by Johnathan Reid Surovell.

**What is the title of work?**

“Social Media: The Case for Deactivation”

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**Who is the author of the work?**

Johnathan Reid Surovell

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**What is the author’s important point?**

Social media has damaging effects on mental health.

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**How does the author support their point?**

A control group who quit Facebook experienced lower cortisol levels.

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**What is the author’s subordinate point?**

Deactivating social media will pressure companies into ethical reform.

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**How is the subordinate point related to the important point?**

If social media companies participate in ethical reform, they will protect their users from damaging their mental health.

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You can combine the answers to these questions to create your summary:

In “Social Media: The Case for Deactivation,” Johnathan Reid Surovell weighs the costs and benefits of social media. While Surovell congratulates government’s attempts at regulating social media platforms like Facebook, he believes that the government is too narrowly focused on protecting the users’ privacy; therefore, he focuses on social media’s effects on mental health. Surovell found that a control group who quit Facebook experienced lower cortisol levels and devoted more time to face-to-face interactions. Surovell hypothesizes that deactivation will pressure social media companies into ethical reform. If social media companies participate in ethical reform, they will protect their users from damaging their mental health.