



## Academic Summary Writing Guidance

Writing a summary of academic journal articles on M-AL study is part of an assignment in a course. In order to write a good summary, you need to know very well what an academic summary is. Below is its brief description.

**An academic summary** is a concise, succinct representation of an academic text such as a scholarly book, journal article, and research report. The main purpose of summaries is to enable the reader in a limited time to determine why a paper, a journal article, a book chapter or a book is worth reading. In other words, an academic summary is useful so that readers can briefly understand the contents of a journal to then become a consideration of whether it is appropriate for what the reader is looking for.

Academic summary is sometimes confused with abstract. An abstract is a brief representation of the aim, method, main results and conclusions of the study, whereas an academic summary typically shows the (argumentation) structure of the text, i.e. the skeleton of the arguments.

The summary must be written in **flowing text** in the words of the **author's own work**, that is, the author **cannot take words exactly from the source text or the original text**. Furthermore, the text of the summary must be written in a language that is in accordance with the formal rules in English and must also be easily understood by people who are not familiar with the original text.

Writing an academic summary has **various functions and uses** for example to help students facing exams and to prepare for a discussion. In this course, the assignment of making summaries of journal articles is to prepare for an academic work. Therefore, students are expected to be able to quickly penetrate the structure and core ideas of a journal article, and to reproduce them concisely in the authors' own words.

The academic summary may serve **three functions**:

- Explaining a text: intended to explore the text types, the main themes, and the theoretical frameworks; focuses on the general content (annotated bibliography).
- Replacing a text: extracts the most important (sub)themes of a text based on a well-considered selection (extract, exam preparation, reading report)
- Discussing a text: a critical report with a substantiated final conclusion (review, essay, final paper, preparation for a group discussion)

**The format** of an academic summary is nearly always the same. A summary of a research report in the form of journal article must contain information on the components mentioned in the table below.



No.	Components	Description
1.	Research question/problem statement	A well-written summary will reveal research questions or problems in the topic that the author will clearly explain, answer, or argue in the text. What issues are being studied? What kind of problems does the author really want to address? On the basis of which specific case did the author do that?
2.	Motivation/relevance	In this section of the summary you will answer the question why this investigation has been conducted. The research question or the definition of the problem statement is connected to an issue that is of importance to the author, either in a social or academic context. What is the author's motivation? What lacuna is the research text trying to fill?
3.	Theoretical framework	Subsequently, you should clarify within what framework the investigation has been conducted. From which theoretical perspective has the author approached the issue? Which scientific theories or models does the author use as starting point to describe, analyse, interpret and explain the issue?
4.	Method	In this section, you will explain how the investigation has been carried out. Only state the outlines; there is no need to explain in full detail. Deliver a concise description of how the investigation has been generated, analysed and interpreted by means of a scientifically proven method. Keep to the most important aspects, such as the structure of the most important data and the method used in the analysis.
5.	Results/arguments	In this section you should process the outcome of the investigation. Do not mention all findings in the summary; narrow it down to the most important findings or arguments relevant for answering the research question or supporting the main thesis. Any unexpected outcomes are to be mentioned as well.
6.	Conclusions	The research question has to be answered in this part of the academic summary. You are not allowed to submit any new information.
7.	<i>Your own opinion</i>	Sometimes, depending on the assignment or the purpose of the summary, it can be useful to provide your own opinion on the text/quality of the investigation. Was it carried out in a way you agree with? Does the author use valid arguments? Make sure to provide your own opinion in a separate paragraph; the summary itself has to be objective.