

JESI, 2009: **Summarizing and Attributing Information**

This sheet shows a technique for writing an objective summary of a magazine article or an essay. It also includes techniques for giving your opinion about what you write.

A summary sentence should include four elements:

- Name of the article
- Author's name
- Thesis statement of the article
- Author's purpose

Read the article completely and articulate the author's thesis in a declarative sentence (your own words).

Example: Television reduces interaction among family members.

Determine the author's name and the name of the article.

Name: Marie Winn

Article: "Television: The Plug-in Drug"

Select a verb that accurately attributes the thought to the author. This verb indirectly indicates the author's purpose. Possible verbs of attribution: suggests, contends, observes, asserts, argues, indicates, implies, writes, states, complains.

Place the word **that** in front of the author's thesis.

Example: that television reduces interaction among family members

Combine the previous steps in the following format:

In (her, his) article (name of article), (name of author) (verb of attribution) that (author's thesis).

Example: In her essay, "Television: The Plug-in Drug," Marie Winn argues that television reduces interaction among family members.

Giving Your Opinion About What Someone Else Writes

You can give your opinion about what someone writes by using an adverb in front of the verb of attribution.

- Adverbs that express agreement: correctly, rightly, accurately, persuasively, compellingly
- Adverbs that express disagreement: wrongly, incorrectly, mistakenly, falsely

Of course, you can write what the author claims, and then, by your choice of words (your diction) you can express your agreement or disagreement. The method described above gives you a method of capturing the author's idea and expression your opinion about it **in one sentence**.

Example:

Agreement: In her essay, "Television: The Plug-in Drug," Marie Winn persuasively argues that television reduces interaction among family members.

Disagreement: In her essay, "Television: The Plug-in Drug," Marie Winn wrongly suggests that television reduces interaction among family members.

Note that I changed the verb of attribution in the disagreement. Sometimes you have to play with words to "hear" how they sound best.