

Guidelines for writing a paper summary

- Aim for a length of 800-1000 words.
- Begin by stating the major question the paper aims to answer. Provide some background or context that suggests why this question may be topical and significant. Then briefly state the overall experimental approach of the paper. If you feel it is appropriate, you may want to close your summary by stating the implications of the paper's conclusions.
- Your summary should be organized. Group related ideas into paragraphs. You might follow the order of the paper, or you may find that a different order is more logical. Outlining your summary before you begin writing may help you organize your thoughts.
- You should make clear that you understand what is most important in this paper by focusing exclusively on what you perceive to be the major experiments and/or analyses. You probably should not summarize every figure in the paper. Omit minor controls or experiments that seem tangential to the main story. It is possible that a major experiment or analysis appears in just a small portion of a figure, or even in a supplemental figure.
- You should describe the logic of each major portion of the study. If one experiment or analysis leads directly and logically to a later one, then you should make this clear. When the experimental design is complicated or clever, the logic of that design should be explained.
- The implications of major results should be stated clearly. If possible, describe the broad significance of these findings for neurobiology as a whole.