

Quickly Summarizing an Article – Rhetorical Précis¹

Sentence #1:

- Name of author or a phrase describing the author if not given.
- The genre and title of the work
- A rhetorically accurate verb (such as "assert," "argue," "suggest," "imply," "claim,"), and
- A THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work

Sentence #2: An explanation of **how** the author develops and/or supports the thesis usually in chronological order.

Sentence #3: A statement of the author's apparent **purpose**, followed by an "in order" phrase

Sentence #4: A description of the **intended audience** and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience

Example:

(1) Toni Morrison, in her essay "Disturbing Nurses and the Kindness of Sharks," **implies that** racism in the United States has affected the craft and process of American novelists. (2) Morrison **supports her implication by describing** how Ernest Hemingway writes about black characters in his novels and short stories. (3) Her **purpose** is to make her readers aware of the cruel reality of racism underlying some of the greatest works of American literature in order to help them examine the far-reaching effects racism has not only on those discriminated against but also on those who discriminate. (4) She establishes a formal and highly analytical tone with her **audience of racially mixed (but probably mainly white)**, theoretically **sophisticated readers and critical interpreters** of American literature.

<http://www.wam.umd.edu/~sapioso/precis.htm>

¹ Adapted from Dr. William Banks <http://english.ecu.edu/~wpbanks/eng8601/8601precis.html>

Format for reading and discussing articles (you have six to understand)

Sentence #1: Name of author, [optional: a phrase describing the author], the genre and title of the work, a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "assert," "argue," "suggest," "imply," "claim,"), and a THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work

Sentence #2: An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis usually in chronological order.

Sentence #3: A statement of the author's apparent purpose, followed by an "in order" phrase

Sentence #4: A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience

#1

#2

#3

#4