**Advice on summary writing**

Summaries, which are written for a variety of reasons, fall into one of two categories: informative or descriptive. In second year, L11, there is a focus on developing skills in informative summary writing, which is concise, objective and accurate. This type of writing has been chosen to help students develop reading skills, while it offers the opportunity to expand vocabulary and reflect on syntax. Summary writing does not necessarily come naturally, however it is a skill that can be learnt and that will improve with practice. The advice below may guide you on the road to good summary writing.

* It may be helpful to start your summary with the words, ‘This summary is (**no other verb**, such as, concerns/speaks about/deals with, etc.) about …’
* Given that a neutral register is appropriate to summary writing, contractions should not be used unless directly reporting informal language.
* Do not summarize the text paragraph by paragraph.
* Always refer to the writer of the article as ‘writer’, not author. For example, ‘According to the writer …’
* Use your own words within reason, so where possible use synonyms and restructuring, for example use the passive voice instead of the active. If you feel the need to use words from the original text be sure to put the words between "quotation marks".
* There is no secret/magic number of words necessary for a summary; a summary is too long if it gives unnecessary information, while it is too short if it omits important information.
* Be very careful not to change meaning. For example, ‘*The police had sufficient evidence to arrest the man for having committed murder’* does not mean *‘The man was arrested because he had committed murder’.*
* Never include any of your own ideas, opinions, or interpretations in an informative summary.
* Remember that a summary is written for a person who has not read the original; make sure you cover the important points. When you have finished writing it, re-read your summary and ask yourself if you had not read the original text would you understand its main content based on your summary.