

The Article Summaries Assignment

One aim of this course is for you to understand newspaper and magazine articles written on macroeconomics and to interpret them with the aid of class material. This assignment will give you practice understanding and interpreting non-text material. It will also give you the opportunity to explore macroeconomic issues that interest you and improve your ability to summarize, a *crucial* research skill.

The assignment has two steps: 1) selecting an appropriate article and 2) writing a summary of it.

How to find a good article

For the first article summary, finding a good article is easy. Pick [one of the ones posted](#) on our class Moodle page, in the section labeled: “October 9 – October 15.”

For the second article summary, find an article on your own. Look over the syllabus and scan the textbook, making a list of topics that might interest you. Any topic in the reading for the class is fine. Take your list and search for articles using a bibliographic database.

Here are leading places you might look:

For *The Economist*: [in Academic OneFile](#)

For the *New York Times*: [in ProQuest](#)

For the *Wall St. Journal*: [in ProQuest](#)

If you have trouble using bibliographic databases, go to the reference desk in the library and ask a librarian’s help. They are experts, both at research and at *helping students* learn how to do research!

Qualities of a good article

Ideally, an article you select will have all of the following characteristics:

- a) It interests you.
- b) It relates to a topic we have studied, or will study, in class.
- c) It is challenging, but **not** too challenging.

A challenging article will help you develop your reading and summarizing skills more than a more basic one. On the other hand, a reading that you struggle to understand, from beginning to end, will make it very hard to do well on this assignment. If you do not understand a reading thoroughly, you cannot summarize it well. To encourage students to select challenging readings, a small part of the final grade for the assignment will be based on how challenging the reading you summarize is.

- d) It is more than 700 words long and from a good source. The reading can be an article from a business and economics magazine (*The Economist* is a good example) or from a newspaper with good business and economics coverage (for example, *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*).
 - If you find a good article that is less than 700 words long, it is *fine* to summarize two shorter articles (as long as they sum to more than 700 words).
 - If you have questions about whether an article is a good candidate for the assignment, just send me a link or a pdf.

Writing a summary

When you write a summary, you should communicate, in a clear, concise way:

- a) the crucial points an article makes and
- b) the crucial evidence used to support them.

You should do both these things in your own words and writing style. Do not restate what your author said sentence by sentence. If you can, rely *completely* on paraphrases and not at all on quotations. If you must use them, however, brief quotations are acceptable. Of course, *any time* you quote an author's words, you must indicate that you have done this by using quotation marks.

Normally a summary strictly limits itself to communicating what's crucial in the text it summarizes. In this case, however, I would like you to do one additional thing: explain one link (the most important one you can see) between the article and class material. For example, that link might explain how your author's understanding of the economy:

- a) is different from what ECN 120 taught, or
- b) went beyond what ECN 120 taught.

Please use the same format for each summary as used by the [model summaries](#), posted on the assignment's web page. Put your name and section in the upper-left-hand corner. Begin the summary with the article author, title, publication, and date. Use the subheading "Link" to identify the section where you explain a link between your article and the class. Single-space your document and fit it to one side of one page.

Write clear, grammatical sentences, with each word spelled correctly. Write paragraphs that hang together. Adhere to all guidelines in the Pamplin School of Business writing handbook, "Expectations for Student Writing." (One exception: you do not need to cite your sources—as long as they are limited to the article you summarize.) The [writing handbook](#) is available on our Moodle page.

Length limits

The whole assignment should contain no more than 30% as many words as the article it summarizes, and a maximum of 450 words. List the word counts for the article and for the assignment just below the last line of the summary. Fit all this on one page (as the model summaries do).

Extra credit

If you meet with a Writing Assistant by Sunday, 10/22, and submit a draft to Turnitin before your meeting, you will receive three bonus points on the assignment. Three points would raise a "B" to a "B+", for example.

What you turn in

Please turn in a typed copy of your article summary. Please also turn in a complete, readable copy of the article(s) summarized. What you turn in should be the *same* copy you read; *don't* make a clean copy. Staple the summaries and the article together in one packet. Do not use a cover; keep it simple!

The paper copy of the first summary is due at the very beginning of class on Tuesday, 10/24. By 11 pm that day, you will also need to submit your paper to Turnitin on Moodle—just the paper, not the article.