

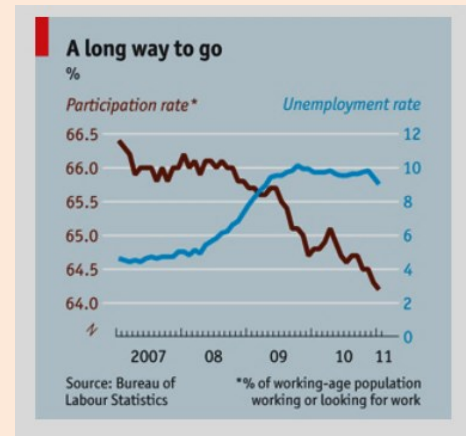
LaunchPad Homework on the Article Summary Assignment

This document poses five questions. Thinking about them will help you write a better article summary assignment. You should answer these five questions in the LaunchPad assignment, "Writing an Effective Article Summary." It is in the Chapter 12 section of Moodle.

One article students have read for the Article Summary Assignment is "Where Are the Workers," in the 2/10/2011 *Economist* magazine. The article talks about some surprising developments in the US labor Market as the economy struggled to recover from the 2008-2009 recession. It includes this selection:

Not only is the population growing more slowly, the share of it in the labour force (that is, either working or looking for work), known as the participation rate, has also fallen. That rate commonly falls during recessions when some of the unemployed give up the search, go back to universities or training colleges or retire early. The decline usually reverses during recovery. Not this time: since the recession ended in mid-2009, the participation rate has kept on sliding (see chart). It has fallen most among the young, many of whom have stayed in education, and least among those over 55.

Most striking has been the drop for men aged 25-54, who have long had the highest participation rates. Some of these men will re-enter the labour market when the economy and job opportunities revive, but many will not. The participation rate of men has been declining for years, apparently because many who lost their high-paid, low-skilled jobs in manufacturing, transport and construction have retired or registered as disabled rather than retraining. Julia Coronado, an economist at BNP Paribas, reckons a wave of early retirements by state- and local-government staff and manufacturing workers may explain the latest downturn. If these men never rejoin the job hunt, it would, paradoxically, help to bring the unemployment rate down faster. That might look like good news; but it is not.



The assignment sheet says: "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."

When you decide what is crucial, you should think of the intent of the author. You should ask yourself, what are the key messages the author is trying to communicate?

1) Which of the following accurately summarizes a crucial point in the passage above?

a) Analyzing labor force participation rates for various groups, one of the biggest surprises is the decline for young workers; many of them are continuing their education rather than seeking work.

b) Analyzing labor force participation rates for various groups, one of the biggest surprises is the decline for men between the ages of 25 and 54.

Another article students read for this assignment was “The Middle Class Gets Wise,” a New York Times piece about people going back to school during the Great Recession. It was published in 10/9/2013. You can see a selection from it on the right below.

Besides focusing on what’s crucial, a good summary should paraphrase **very accurately**.

2) Below you can see two selections from student summaries of this article. Which one is more accurate?

a) Summary #1

b) Summary #2

Summary #1

Making the best of a very weak labor market, Americans are increasingly going to college. For example, focus on people 25 to 29. From 2000 to 2006, the share with college degrees dropped .7 percentage points. However, from 2006 to 2011, college enrollment rose a massive 18 percent. The percent of men with a degree rose from 25.3 to 29.8 percent during those years.

Levels of college education in America are low compared to other rich countries. Not having the education necessary is creating a labor force in America that cannot meet the requirements set by employers.

Summary #2

The recession led to many men and women realizing that having a college degree would set them apart from the rest of the men and women fighting for the same job position. In 2011 there was an 18% increase in enrollment in college from 2006. That had been the largest enrollment since the end of the Vietnam War. People began to realize that the more education they had under their belt the more money they earned.

American employers have been unhappy with the ability of college graduates to do math and read job materials.

“Perhaps we underestimate ourselves. Five years after the Lehman collapse triggered the deepest recession in eight decades, the middle class may be solving the vexing problems of income inequality and stalled wages on its own.

Faced with unemployment and dim job prospects, Americans made one significant change that should alter their fortunes and those of the middle class for decades: they went back to school. During the recession, there has been a sharp surge in the number of Americans who are getting a college degree.

For much of the last several decades young Americans, particularly young men, had shied away from college. As a share of the population, there were actually more male college degree holders among those ages 25 to 29 in 1976 than there were in 2006. Between 2000 and 2006, the share of all Americans ages 25 to 29 with a four-year college degree dipped by 0.7 percentage points, with men leading the decline, falling from 27.9 percent to 25.3 percent.

Americans have now reversed that decline by going to school in unprecedented numbers. In 2011, there were 3.2 million more people enrolled in higher education than there were in 2006. This 18 percent increase in enrollment was the largest such jump since the end of the Vietnam War.

In the last six years, American higher education institutions conferred nearly 3.5 million more degrees (from associates to Ph.D.’s) than they did over the six years before that. By last year, 29.8 percent of men and 37.2 percent of women ages 25 to 29 possessed four-year college degrees. This blows past previous highs.

Educational gains during the recession were not reserved for the young. By 2010, there were nearly 8 million students over the age of 25 enrolled in higher education institutions, 1.2 million more than in 2007. Degrees conferred at all levels of education for all races, ages and genders are up from six years ago.

The knock on the American work force is that when it comes to brainpower, it has fallen behind our international competitors. In a recent survey of 23 countries by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, American adults were mediocre in both math and reading. In “The Undereducated American,” Anthony P. Carnevale and Stephen J. Rose assert that the United States has been underproducing college graduates since the 1980s, creating a labor force unable to match the needs of employers.

But is college still worth it today? It’s not just that college graduates are riding out the meager recovery living in their parents’ basements; the fear is that they will permanently underperform in the labor market. This seems unlikely. The recession has followed familiar labor patterns, with unemployment rates among college graduates roughly half those of high school graduates, just as in every recession since the mid-1970s.

In time, these young college graduates will find work and they will earn pay that is significantly higher than what they would have earned had they not gone to college.

How can we be so certain? Because the more education you have, the more you earn. In 2012, two-year-degree holders earned close to \$7,000 more per year than their high-school-diploma-only counterparts. Someone with a four-year degree earned roughly \$15,000 more than that same someone with an associate degree. A professional degree reaped nearly \$35,000 more than a four-year college degree, according to the Department of Labor.”

Still another article students read was “Pay for Delay,” in the 11/9/2008 *Economist*. Among other things, it looks at why the unemployment rate rose so much faster in the US than in many European countries during the first part of the Great Recession. The article includes the graph and text to the right.

3) The assignment sheet emphasizes the importance of thorough paraphrase:

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.

In terms of this discussion, which of the following is the best summary of a crucial point made to the right?

- If a government helps companies keep their workers employed, the government reduces its aid payments to unemployed people and helps companies hang on to talent.
- In a credit crunch, firms may too readily fire workers. European governments fund generous jobless benefits anyway. By subsidizing the wages of employees working reduced hours, they spend less on jobless benefits and help firms to hoard workers and keep a skilled workforce intact.

4) To make it easier for me to grade papers, the assignment sheet specifies the format for the article summary assignment and information you should provide. Here are links to two student papers:

[ASA #1](#) and [ASA #2](#)

Which of the papers does the best job of following the format and providing the information requested in the assignment sheet?

- ASA #1
- ASA #2



What explains the resilience of continental Europe? Some of it was already built-in. Job-protection laws make it costly for firms to lay off workers, and where posts are sacrificed, the newly unemployed are preserved from penury. They receive benefits worth around two-thirds of their lost salaries in most countries. Only in Italy are benefits anywhere near as skimpy as in America and Britain, where new claimants receive just 28% of their previous earnings. European governments also have fewer qualms about intervention. A new report from the OECD identifies 14 kinds of job-market initiatives put in place since recession struck. France ticks 12 of those boxes, more than any other country.

One policy in particular has helped keep a lid on unemployment. Schemes that subsidize the wages of employees working fewer hours than normal were introduced or expanded in 22 of the 29 countries surveyed by the OECD. Germany had around 1.4m workers on its short-time working scheme by the summer, equivalent to a cull of 400,000-500,000 full-time workers. That would add one percentage point to the jobless rate. Countries without these arrangements, such as America, Britain and Spain, have tended to suffer bigger rises in unemployment (see chart).

In normal times, wage subsidies would be frowned upon. But in a credit crunch they can be a smart use of fiscal resources. Firms worried about future sales, low on cash and deprived of credit, may too readily fire workers without a subsidy. That would only add to a downward spiral of confidence and spending. In Europe, the state funds generous jobless benefits in any case. Why not instead make it easier for firms to hoard workers and keep a skilled workforce intact for when the economy turns?

5) One part of the assignment sheet specifies the following:

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."

Below find two versions of a selection from the "Link" section of an article summary. Which better fits the expectations set by the assignment sheet and the handbook?

a) One central concept that we covered in class was the discouraged-worker effects which explains that people who want to work, but have trouble finding a job grows discouraged and stops looking, thus dropping out of the labor force.

b) One concept our class covered was that of a discouraged worker. Such a worker is out of work, but has trouble finding a job. As a result, they become discouraged and stop looking, dropping out of the labor force.