

Instructions for the Critical Summary

The essay must be two pages, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margin. Please provide relevant citations. Summaries which are less than two pages will be penalized. Please upload the critical summary on blackboard.

Here are some guidelines to write a **critical summary**. It is a summary but you are also expected to read, think and critically evaluate what the author is saying. Here are some guidelines or questions which may help you write the critical summary¹. These are guidelines. I do not expect that all these questions will be answered but you will be graded for your effort.

- I. Summary – “What is the reading saying?”
 1. What question is the author answering in this essay?
It might be helpful for you to begin the essay with the question the author is trying to answer. For instance, in the essay *Development as Freedom*, you could say the author is trying to answer the question: What is Development? How do we understand development in ways that affect human beings in a holistic way?
 2. What is the author’s main argument? This is the answer to the question you formulated at the beginning of the essay.
 3. What sub-arguments or claims does the author provide to make the main argument? You may not be able to cover all the points in the text, but you should be able to identify some major claims the author is making to connect
 4. What conclusions is the author arriving at? This means what broader implications does the author arrive at, based on the arguments they made?

- II. Critical Analysis
 1. Does the author provide evidence for their arguments? Evidence could also mean examples, or references to other studies that support the author’s arguments.
 2. Is the author making any assumption in making their argument? There may be explicit or implicit assumptions in the reading. What are those? Do you agree with those assumptions?
 3. Is the argument persuasive? Does the evidence match the claim? Is the author missing out other data that could make an opposite claim? Overall, is the argument logical, fair and consistent? Do you agree with the argument?
 4. If there were multiple texts, how do the authors agree or disagree with each other?
 5. How does the reading make you think differently about the topic of discussion? Did you learn anything new?

¹ These guidelines are borrowed from the book, *Writing for Sociology Guide* compiled by Jennifer Jones, Sarah Quinn and Hana Brown. Specifically, these guidelines are borrowed from “Guidelines for Critical Reading” by Cinzia Solari (p. 16-17).