**How to Summarize**

Summaries contain the most important facts in an article. Usually summaries are less than one third the length

of the article being summarized.

Keep the following information in mind when you summarize a selection:

1. Identify the material you are summarizing, giving the author, title, and any relevant publishing

information.

2. Present the most important facts and the conclusion found in the article.

Follow this procedure when summarizing an article:

• Read the material carefully and take notes about the most important ideas and details.

• Delete trivial, unnecessary information.

• Delete redundant material.

• Substitute super ordinate words for lists (ie. flowers for daisies, tulips, and roses).

• Select a topic sentence, or invent one if it’s missing.

• Write the summary in your own words.

• Make sure your summary is accurate in both content and emphasis.

The source for this information is Pickett, Nell Ann and Ann Laster. Technical English. New York: Harper

Collins College Publishers, 1996.

**Summary Self-Evaluation**

When you have completed your summary rough draft, use the following checklist to

revise your work. Ask yourself the following questions:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_1. Have I deleted all trivial, unnecessary information?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2. Have I deleted redundant material?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_3. What is the author’s emphasis? What is my emphasis? Have I

accurately represented the author’s content and emphasis?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_4. Have I used the author’s topic sentence or created one of my own?

What is my topic sentence?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_5. Have I written the summary in my own words?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_6. Have I identified the material I have summarized? What is the title

and who is the author?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_7. Have I followed good writing practices?