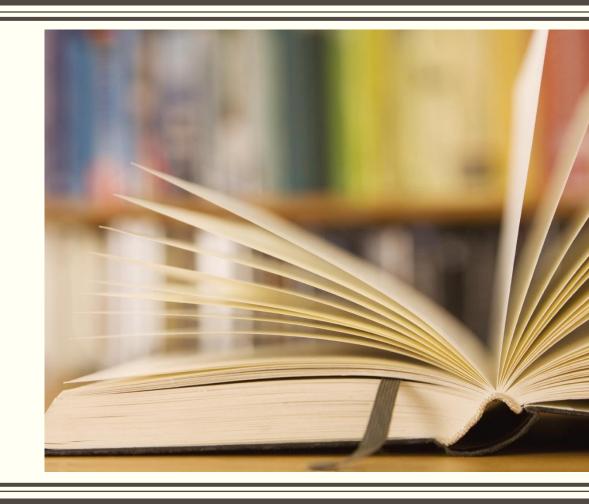
# TAKING NOTES ON NON-FICTION



### MLA 8 Citation

When reading a non-fiction piece always make note of the key elements for a proper citation in the event that you will need it later.

The following format is the current order in which you organize these elements when available.

#### Sample Citation:

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of the Article or Individual Page." *Title of the Website*, Name of the Publisher, Date of Publication in Day Month Year format, URL.

#### **TEMPLATE**

- 1. Author.
- 2. Title of Piece.
- 3. Title of Source,
- 4. Version,
- 5. Volume Number,
- 6. Book or Website Publisher,
- 7. Publication Date or Year,
- 8. Location of the Source (URL, permalink, or Page Range).

## First Time Reading the Article or Essay

- Read the text for its main points
- Identify and define any unfamiliar or difficult language

## Second Time Reading the Article or Essay

- Reread carefully and make a descriptive outline
  - Write down the text's central idea/thesis. (Pretend you had to explain it to another person in one sentence)
  - Identify the text's major divisions or chunks. These divisions typically function as background, supporting information, summary of opposing views, etc.
- Try summarizing each division in one or two sentences
- Finally, combine summaries of the parts into a coherent whole

## What Makes a Good Summary?

Good summaries must be fair, unbalanced, accurate, and complete. The following questions can be used to help evaluate drafts of a summary.

- Is the summary economical and precise?
- Is the summary **neutral** in its representation of the original author's ideas, omitting the writer's own opinions?
- Does the summary reflect the proportionate coverage given various points in the original text?
- Are the original author's ideas expressed in the summary writer's own words?
- Does the summary use attributive tags (such as "Westin argues") to remind readers whose ideas are being presented?
- Does the summary quote sparingly (usually only key ideas or phrases that cannot be said precisely except in the original author's own words)?
- Will the summary stand alone as a unified and coherent piece of writing?
- Is the original source cited so that readers can locate it?

#### Rhetorical Precis

- A rhetorical précis differs from a summary in that it is a less neutral, more analytical condensation of both the content and method of the original text. If you think of a summary as primarily a brief representation of what a text says, then you might think of the rhetorical precis as a brief representation of what a text both says and does. Here are the specific directions for what to include in a four-sentence rhetorical precis:
- Sentence 1--- name of author, genre, and title of work, date in parentheses; a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "claims," "argues," "asserts," "suggests"); and a THAT clause containing the major idea or thesis statement in the work.
- Sentence 2--- an explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.
- Sentence 3--- a statement of the author's apparent purpose.
- Sentence 4--- a description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.