

Summary Embedded in Analysis

One of the challenges of academic writing is to master the art of providing information the reader needs without resorting to straight summary. In writing about an article or novel or short story or fairy tale, the temptation is to write straight summary and then comment on it. But there is a better way—embedding your summary in an analytical statement. It's efficient, it's sophisticated, and it's reader-friendly. Let's practice. First, I've given you an example of summary followed by analysis and then summary embedded in analysis:

From an essay on Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*:

“The novel *The Robber Bride* tells the story of three women, beginning with their childhoods, moving to their college experiences, and ending with their middle age, where they are wives and mothers. These three stages depart from the typical figures of fairy tale, however, because we see them not in just one stage, such as the maiden, but in various configurations.”

“Tony, Roz, and Charis are not the typical figures of fairy tale, however, because we see them not in just one stage, such as the maiden, but in various configurations as their life stories are told, from children to young women in college to middle-aged wives and mothers.”

Activity:

- First, choose a major/important point from today's reading (you can select whatever you like). Then, on a separate sheet of paper, write a sentence that summarizes the point in your own words (thus writing a paraphrase).
- Next, write *two* different sentences that embed this necessary summary in an analytical statement.
- Finally, share your sentences with a partner. With your partner, revise them—making sure that the sentences work effectively as summary and analysis, flow well, and are generally free of clutter/wordiness. We'll share some examples.