

## Traditional Rules-Based Summarization

(Based on Summarization in Any Subject by Rick Wormeli, p. 175)

1. Draw a line through anything that seems trivial or frivolous, such as adjectives, side comments, similar examples, and transition words (however, be sure to pay attention to the logic imposed by carefully selected transition words).
2. Draw a line through anything that is redundant or repetitive. The author might be trying to elaborate, but if you get his point with the first example or explanation then you don't need the rest of the text to encapsulate the message.
3. Replace specific terms with general terms. For example, if the original text lists "flies, honeybees, mosquitoes, and moths," then you might substitute "flying insects."
4. Take what you have left (i.e. all that you haven't crossed out) and *put into your own words*. Do not quote.
5. Finally, determine a good topic sentence for the material. Just remember that every topic sentence has *two* parts: the subject *and* the author's claim about it. "Civil rights" is not a topic sentence; it's a subject. "Civil rights are negatively affected by homeland security laws" is a topic sentence.

NOTE: Summaries are *usually* 1/10<sup>th</sup> – 1/20<sup>th</sup> the length of the original article (this is brought to you by Mr. Cogswell, not Mr. Wormeli).

You can easily remember these four steps by using the term "T-RG-TS" or TARGETS:

T - *Trivia* (Remove trivial material.)

R - *Redundancies* (Remove redundant or repetitive information.)

G - *Generalize* (Replace specifics or lists with general terms and phrases.)

TS - *Topic Sentence* (Determine the topic sentence, which is the subject plus the author's claim about the subject.)