

SUMMARIES

Summaries provide a brief overview of a piece of writing by reducing it to its main points.

Instructions:

- Step 1:** Read the article carefully at least twice. Check the meanings of any unfamiliar words. You should now have an idea of the author's position and the arguments used for support.
- Step 2:** Reread the material and write down the main points. Each paragraph usually contains one main point, often found in the topic sentence. Do not copy from the article; put the main ideas into your own words.
- Step 3:** Now that you have listed the main points, reread them and write a thesis statement (a statement that summarizes the purpose or message of the article).
- Step 4:** Once you have written the thesis statement, go back over your main points and cross out any that are repetitive or unnecessary.
- Step 5:** Write the summary, beginning with your thesis statement. Organize your sentences into paragraphs. Be sure to use transitions to help your reader understand the sequence of ideas.
- Step 6:** Proofread your summary for errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling.

Sample Article and Summary

<p>Childhood: A Historical Overview By Bob Smith</p>	<p>Paragraphs 1 and 2 In our world today, children are important people, who are considered to be very different from adults in their needs, interests and abilities. Parents can buy</p>
---	--

many articles specifically designed for children; they can consult doctors who have specialized in the field of child care; they can eat in restaurants which provide special children's menus; they can take them to entertainments specifically designed for children at particular developmental stages.

This has not always been so. Until the seventeenth century, children were generally considered to be immature adults. Childhood was seen as a pre-adult period that should be used to prepare children for the "real" world of adulthood. Children wore clothing that was a miniature model of that worn by their parents. Their games prepared them for adult roles; the girls learned cooking, sewing and social graces, while the boys played competitive and often physically violent games. Many of the games children enjoy so much today were then played by the whole family. Stories such as fairy tales and legends, which are presently considered to be children's literature, were originally meant to amuse adults.

Paragraph 3

During the seventeenth century a new attitude towards children developed, probably because of the strong religious revival in Europe and the New World. The child became a special person, an innocent, who needed to be spared from adult problems. Moral and

Summary

In the article "Childhood: A Historical Overview," Bob Smith examines the evolution of attitudes towards children from the seventeenth century until present.

Today children are believed to be different from adults in their interests, needs and abilities. For these reasons, books, toys and games are designed especially for children. This wasn't always so, and up to the 17th century, children were seen as immature adults. Childhood was meant to prepare children for adulthood; therefore, they were required to do adult things.

spiritual instructions were principal educational goals. The child must be helped or guided; thus literature for young children became highly moralistic. Its purpose was to help them to become virtuous, God-fearing adults. Thus, in 1671-72, James Janeway wrote, "A Token for Children – being an exact account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths of several Young Children." In the same century, New England boys and girls learned their alphabet by memorizing rhymes like the following:

a) "In Adam's fall
We sinned all"

b) "Thy life to mend
God's Bock attend"
New England Primer, 1961.

Paragraphs 4 and 5

It was not until the nineteenth century that the uniqueness of childhood was generally recognized. Popular writings of these times portrayed children as precious and fragile. The mother, enshrined in a concept of maternal purity, protected children from the ugly world of men. The times were ready to receive Darwin's vision of man in which he portrayed children as the key to the ongoing development of man.

During the Victorian period parents became more directly involved in raising their children. Though their chief concern was still that of inculcating specific "virtues" such as strength of character, body and mind, they did provide books and activities which were simply to be enjoyed. Many of the classic books of this period are still read for sheer enjoyment today.

Paragraph 6

Many types of child rearing practices can be found in North American families

During the 17th century, a new attitude, linked to the revival of religion, developed. Children were seen as innocents who needed to be protected from adult problems. Emphasis was placed on their spiritual and moral development.

During the 19th century, childhood was generally believed to be a unique period of life. The theories of Darwin emphasized children as the key to the development of man. At the end of the 19th century, in the Victorian era, parents became more involved in child rearing, and a new emphasis on enjoyment of childhood emerged.

SUMMARIES

today. On the whole, children are still considered to be in need of continuous training and guidance towards adulthood. Families in which children are abused still exist. Other families are raising children according to the newly developing proposition that the child knows better than the parents what he or she needs at each stage of his or her life. Child rearing practices have a tremendous impact on our society. William Kersen suggests that instead of asking "Have you hugged your child today?," it would be more enlightening to ask "Have you thought what your child will be like when he's 40 years old?"

In North America today, child-rearing practices vary greatly, but in general, children are seen as needing guidance to become capable adults. Since the child rearing practices greatly influence our society, William Kersen suggests that parents should ask themselves what their children will be like when they become adult.

