

Summarizing a Journal Article from an Outline

In the handout “Outlining a Journal Article,” you learned how to read a journal article, then derive an outline from it. I outlined the Ceci and Bronfenbrenner article for you, as a model. Now, I will use that outline to write a summary. First, recall my original outline:

Outline of Ceci and Bronfenbrenner (1985) Prospective Memory in Children

- I. Research Question(s)/Purpose of the article
The main purpose of this study is to examine a strategy called “strategic time monitoring,” which is used by children when they have to perform a prospective memory task.
- II. Hypothesis/Hypotheses
Clock checking would be higher in the laboratory than at home.
- III. Variables
 - a. Independent Variable
Location of experiment
 - b. Dependent Variable
Clock checking
- IV. Methodology
 - a. Who participated?
96 children, half of whom were 10 years old, and half who were 14 years old.
 - b. What did they do?
They were asked to bake cupcakes, and put them in the oven by a certain time and to remove them 30 minutes later. While waiting for the cupcakes, the children were told they could play PacMan in an adjoining room. The experimenters also pointed out a wall clock.
- V. Major Findings
The hypothesis was supported. Children tended to do more clock-checking while baking cupcakes in the laboratory as compared to in their home, which could mean that children were more comfortable in their home than in the laboratory. The different colors have been added to the outline so you can see where each part of our outline appears in our summary.

The areas in standard, black font are standard phrases that would appear in a summary. So, here is my summary (the font was enlarged so it would be easier for you to see the colors – normally, you would use 12-point font, and the text should be in all black, and not colored):

Ceci and Bronfenbrenner (1985) conducted a study on prospective memory in children. The main purpose of this study is to examine a strategy called “strategic time monitoring,” which is used by children when they have to perform a prospective memory task. The authors hypothesized that clock checking would be higher in the laboratory than at home.

To examine clock checking, Ceci and Bronfenbrenner (1985) varied the location of the experiment. The study included 96 children, half of whom were 10 years old, and half who were 14 years old. They were asked to bake cupcakes, and put them in the oven by a certain time and to remove them 30 minutes later. While waiting for the cupcakes, the children were told they could play PacMan in an adjoining room. The experimenters also pointed out a wall clock.

Ceci and Bronfenbrenner (1985) found that the hypothesis was supported. Children tended to do more clock-checking while baking cupcakes in the laboratory as compared to in their home, which could mean that children were more comfortable in their home than in the laboratory. The different colors have been added to the outline so you can see where each part of our outline appears in our summary.