Writing a Summary – “The Wet Drug”

Writing a summary is an important skill a college student should have in his/her toolbox. Imagine that a student who has not read the “Wet Drug” asks you what the article was about. You would usually answer that student in a few sentences, a form of summary we commonly use. Now you are being asked to use that same “quick content review” concept, but to write a formal and complete summary. Follow the following steps to write a summary for Pete Hamill’s “The Wet Drug” on page 28.

1) The goal is to write the author’s thesis or main idea and then add his primary supporting points. Your summary should be 200 words or less. You are selected Hamill’s main points, not retelling everything he said. You summary will be one paragraph.

2) Tell only what Hamill said. Do not give any of your own opinions.

3) Start the sentence the authors’ name, the title of the essay, and a statement of his main claim. From this point on, if you refer to the author, use just his last name.

Example: In his essay “The Wet Drug,” Pete Hamill argues that drinking is a destructive habit.”

4) Use your own words to tell what he said. In other words, paraphrase him. If you wish to repeat a few of Hamill’s exact phrases, you must use quotation marks around those words.

Example: To add to their other destructive habits, Hamill says these “vomiting slaughterers” cause death on our highways.

5) Occasionally remind the reader whose ideas you are summarizing. Use phrases such as “In addition, Hamill claims” “He then adds” “Hamill goes so far as to accuse heavy drinkers of…” “Finally, the author gives…”