Summary and Analysis

One of the more frustrating aspects of academic assignments is the difference between summary and analysis. Students sometimes misunderstand what an instructor desires from a paper, leading to assignments that do not accomplish what they are supposed to do. A comparison between summary and analysis will help one understand what each approach entails.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condense Material</td>
<td>Expand on material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rephrase what has already been said</td>
<td>Add something new to what is being said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers the Question, “What is being said?”</td>
<td>Answers the question “How is it being said?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Summary is meant to condense the material that has been presented. It concentrates the central ideas that are in the piece being summarized. Summary helps remind the reader what the most important aspects of the paper are and helps to further illuminate the significance of what is being said.

Analysis

Analysis is meant to add something new to the conversation. Analysis involves writing your own thoughts and perspectives on the material in question. Effective analysis will show how the material being examined connects to your thoughts and topic.

Helpful Tips for Summarizing

- Summarize the whole piece in a sentence.
- Mark transitions, dividing the article into major sections.
• Summarize each section in one sentence.

• Go through the summary and add details that the summary sentences missed.

• Edit for coherence.

Helpful Tips for Analyzing

• Interrogate the material. Ask questions about what you are analyzing.

• What is the importance of this material? What does it say about your topic? How does it contribute to your message?

• Who is the audience?

• What is the central message or thesis?

• How does the material communicate its message? What strategies does it use?

• Why is this material important?

Example:
The digital tsunami that swept over the Capitol last month, forcing Congress to set aside legislation to combat the online piracy of American music, movies, books and other creative works, raised questions about how the democratic process functions in the digital age.

Policy makers had recognized a constitutional (and economic) imperative to protect American property from theft, to shield consumers from counterfeit products and fraud, and to combat foreign criminals who exploit technology to steal American ingenuity and jobs. They knew that music sales in the United States are less than half of what they were in 1999, when the file-sharing site Napster emerged, and that direct employment in the industry had fallen by more than half since then, to less than 10,000. They studied the problem in all its dimensions, through multiple hearings.
(Taken from *What Wikipedia Won’t Tell You* by Cary H. Sherman)

**Summary:**

The author writes that although the government has recognized the problem of digital theft, the outcry against the recently proposed legislations made to combat online piracy has raised significant questions about how democracy functions in the digital age.

**Analysis:**

The author of this article uses weather catastrophe metaphors to highlight what he sees as a crisis of how our government is influenced by the forces leveraged by internet users.