

Summary, Point, and Question

by

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Read a research paper by an ICS faculty member in an area that you find technically interesting.

Write a short paragraph for each topic below, each paragraph about the same length. Do not exceed one page total. Write briefly, concisely, and clearly. Strive for a short, crisp, clear statement that uses few words but is complete. Organize the ideas in the paragraph into a coherent story.

Summary — What is the paper about? (no jargon)

You might consider whether these questions are relevant to your paper. It is not necessary to ask or answer any or all of them:

What area does the paper discuss? What is the problem addressed? Why is this problem important? What would be different if we solved this problem? What's blocking progress? What is the approach taken by the paper? What is its key "Make-A-Difference" idea? Was the idea implemented? Was it tested? What were the results? How does its performance compare to other systems that do related things? What future opportunities does the paper open up? What future work or extensions are likely?

Note that the answers to the questions above tell a story. It begins by describing the story's setting. It ends by describing how things are (or will be) different after the story is over. The events in the story follow a logical development, that is, they occur in a coherent order that makes sense.

"Once upon a time there was a computer system that lived in a castle in the far-away land of Internet. A horrible Problem was terrorizing the countryside. One day the computer system rode out to do battle with the Problem. After a ferocious fight, the computer system defeated the Problem and freed Internet from its evil grasp. The people rejoiced. The computer system lived happily ever after."

A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end; events occur in order.

Point — What was most interesting to you, and why?

One short, crisp, clear paragraph. Imagine that you are describing to the faculty member what it was about their work that you found interesting. What would you say? How would you say it briefly and clearly?

Question — What question did the paper raise in your mind?

One short, crisp, clear paragraph, as above. This is an opportunity to practice looking at innovative work and speculating about where it might lead.