

## **Title: One Sentence Summary**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the One Sentence Summary assessment technique is to have students summarize completely and concisely significant information in one sentence, using **Who? Does What? To What or Whom? When? Where? How? Why?** After answering these questions, students formulate **One-Sentence Summary**.

### **Descriptive Examples:**

A political science professor had her students create a one-sentence summary for the presidential election in the United States. The results were as follows:

**Who:** registered voters

**Does What:** cast their votes

**To/For Whom:** for the one candidate of their choice

**When:** on the first Tuesday in November of every fourth year

**Where:** in thousands of official neighborhood polling places (or by mail-in absentee ballot)

**How:** by indicating their choice on a secret ballot

**Why:** in hopes that their preferred candidate will win the majority of votes in their states, be awarded the state's Electoral College votes as a result, and similarly, win the national election, thereby becoming President.

**One-Sentence Summary:** **In a U.S. presidential election,** registered voters cast their votes for the one candidate of their choice on the first Tuesday in November of every fourth year in thousands of official neighborhood polling places (or by absentee ballot), by indicating their choice on a secret ballot in hopes that their preferred candidate will win the majority of votes in their states, be awarded the state's Electoral College votes as a result, and similarly, win the national election, thereby becoming President.

A biology professor used the One-Sentence Summary to have students explain how HIV infects and affects the immune system. She stipulated that the HIV virus had to be the **Who**.

A physics professor asked his students to summarize the hydro-electric power generation process, stipulating that water had to be the **Who**.

### **Using the resulting data:**

Faculty can analyze the elements in the One-Sentence Summary in order to ascertain what students understood best and least. Students can also review their one-sentence summary with other students to improve each other's summaries. Students can also create summaries in a group and then share with the entire class.

### **Strengths:**

Provides students the opportunity to summarize a topic concisely and coherently and allows instructor to become aware of concepts that students do not understand.

### **Weaknesses:**

Not all topics can be contained in a one-sentence summary, especially if it would oversimplify the material or if the **Who? What?** questions have multiple answers.

Adapted by Professor Joan Naake from *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* by Thomas Angelo and Patricia Cross. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993.

