

# Book Summary Methodology

Reference sheet

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## The Deliverables

Every book on my reading list produces two deliverables: chapter summaries and a book summary. They serve different purposes and follow different rules. Chapter summaries are written after completing each chapter, with a goal of 300 words per chapter. The book summary is written after completing all chapter summaries; it is a synthesis document—500 to 800 words.

## The Questions

Each chapter summary answers five questions in a fixed order.

1. What is the author's central argument?
2. What evidence supports it?
3. What is the most important idea, and why does it matter?
4. Where do I disagree with or question the author, and on what grounds?
5. How does this connect to something I have experienced, observed, or am working toward?

The first three demonstrate comprehension, the fourth demands critical thinking. The fifth is where the material meets my life, my work, and my goals.

The book summary answers two questions.

1. What did I learn, or what new perspective did the author offer, that I did not have before reading this book?
2. How does what I learned apply to my goals?

## The Standard

A person who has not read the book should be able to read my chapter summaries and understand the author's arguments. A person who has derstand the

# Questions and Prompts

Reference for all chapter and book summary questions.

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## Chapter Summary

### 1. What is the author's central argument?

*State the main claim the author makes in this chapter. The argument is the position the author is defending—the thing the chapter exists to convince you of. One to two sentences.*

### 2. What evidence supports it?

*Identify the specific evidence, examples, data, or reasoning the author uses to back the claim. Focus on what supports the argument you identified above.*

### 3. What is the most important idea, and why does it matter?

*This may or may not be the central argument. It is the single idea from this chapter that carries the most weight—the one you would keep if you had to discard everything else. Say why it matters.*

### 4. Where do I disagree with or question the author, and on what grounds?

*Every chapter has something worth questioning. Look for unsupported claims, logical gaps, missing perspectives, or assumptions the author treats as obvious. State your grounds.*

### 5. How does this connect to something I have experienced, observed, or am working toward?

*Name a specific experience, observation, or goal. The connection should be concrete enough that only you could have written it.*

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## Book Summary

### 1. What did I learn, or what new perspective did the author offer, that I did not have before reading this book?

*Review your chapter summaries before you write this. Identify the single most valuable thing you gained—a piece of knowledge, a reframing, a correction to something you previously believed.*

### 2. How does what I learned apply to my goals?

*Name a specific goal and describe how what you learned serves it. Describe the application: what changes, where it applies, and what it makes possible.*