

Hum9: Knowledge and Reality, Winter 2013
Assignment 1: Summary
Due in class, Thursday, Jan 24

Sadly, your friend in Hum9 has been ill and was unable to do the reading for this week. She asks you to summarize the Swinburne chapter "Why God Allows Evil" for her. Your friend is of course familiar with the general problem of evil, but is unaware of what Swinburne says about it.

You have three tasks and I recommend you do them in the following order:

First, summarize the chapter in at most one printed page. This can be in paragraph form, but it is often helpful to summarize things with bullet-points in a skeletal, hierarchical structure (problem, followed by his answer, an objection, and his reply. Next problem...)

Second, summarize the chapter as you might in an email. Perhaps in sentence form in about 200 words.

Third, summarize the chapter as you would in a text message. Perhaps a few sentences of about 50 words.

Print two copies of each of these out and bring them to class on Thursday. We will break into small groups to discuss how to improve our answers.

There are many ways to summarize a piece and the general goals (including length constraints) change what counts as a good summary. Should you make sure to mention every point that Swinburne makes? No, not even in the longest outline. Summarizing is about figuring out what is most important to know and what the logical structure of the argument is. When it comes time to write just a few sentences, you basically are looking for what the conclusions of the paper are and you no longer have any room for explaining arguments.