Implications Activity

I used these two article summaries in an in-class activity designed to help students practice paraphrasing academic work (see Writing About Theory activities in the provided slides).

Article 1 Citation:
Hitt, M. P., & Searles, K. (2018). Media coverage and public approval of the U.S. Supreme Court. *Political Communication*, *35*, 566–586. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1467517

Predictions/questions raised: The authors predicted that game-frame content has increased over time in in news coverage about the Supreme Court. They also predicted that exposure to game-frame news will make it less likely that people will accept or agree with the decisions the Supreme Court makes.

Based on what theory and/or previous research: The authors based their predictions on framing theory. They define frames, generally, as words (or other types of news content) that focus the attention of news readers on one part of an issue and draw attention away from other parts of an issue. Game frames, specifically, are defined as types of news content that focus on strategy and horserace rather than political issues and policy.

Method(s) used: content analysis, experiment, survey

Were the predictions supported? What did the author(s) find? Their predictions were supported. Game-frame news coverage of the Supreme Court increased between 1990 and 2010. Exposure to game-frame coverage decreased the likelihood that a person would support a decision made by the Supreme Court. And approval of the Supreme Court decreased over the same time span in which game-frame coverage increased.

Article 2 Citation:
Iyengar, S. (1990). Framing responsibility for political issues: The case of poverty. *Political Behavior, 12*, 19–40.

Predictions/questions raised: Thematic frames encourage people to attribute responsibility to society; Episodic frames encourage people to attribute responsibility to individuals who happen to be poor.

Based on what theory and/or previous research: Framing theory. The author describes framing as the choice to use certain words or descriptions over others in a variety of settings, including news coverage. Episodic news frames are those that emphasize individual experience and specific instances. Thematic news frames are those that emphasize trends and policy.

Method(s) used: experiment, survey

Were the predictions supported? What did the author(s) find? The predictions were largely supported. People who were exposed to thematic frames thought society was more to blame for poverty. People who were exposed to episodic frames thought individuals were more to blame for poverty.