

QUOTE, PARAPHRASE OR SUMMARIZE?

Quoting

To quote means to use the exact wording of another person or source; in that case, you must enclose it in quotation marks and give credit to the source so as to not plagiarize.

You must quote:

- When giving the exact wording of laws, official rulings, and important edicts;
- When citing mathematical, scientific, and other formulas;
- When the statement is hypothetical, i.e., subject to confirmation or refutation;
- When the exact words of a writer seem to be absolutely essential (for example, when the exact words of a writer are unique, memorable, or difficult to rephrase while keeping the same emphasis; and,
- When the author's authority (and exact words) lend credibility to your paper.

Brackets

Sometimes it is necessary to add/change words to the quote to make it appropriate for your paper. Use brackets [] to show where you have added/changed words.

Ellipsis

An ellipsis is a set of three spaced dots ... that is used when you omit words from a quote, in which case you must replace the omitted words with an ellipsis. If you need to use ellipses at the end of a sentence, use three dots plus the period.

Refer to a grammar handbook or style guide for the correct use of brackets and ellipses, as well as for rules regarding punctuation with brackets and ellipses. Check with your professor as to the appropriate style guide for your discipline.

Some guidelines for quoting:

- Don't just quote and run. Either precede or follow up quotations with an explanation of how the quote supports the point you are making.
- Introduce quotes with signal words. You need to signal the reader that a quote is about to be used, and you need to indicate whose words you are quoting. The following are some signal verbs you could use to integrate quotes into your paper.

acknowledges, declares, remarks, states

advises, criticizes, replies, suggests

agrees, describes, responds, writes

claims, emphasizes, objects, thinks
concludes, discusses, disagrees, says

The following are **examples** of how to use signal words.

- Wilson acknowledges that...
- as Wilson declares.
- Wilson says...
- ...concludes Wilson.
- Wilson describes...
- ...objects Wilson.

Paraphrasing

To paraphrase means to re-state someone else's ideas in your own words. Paraphrases focus on more than just a single main idea. Since the words in a paraphrase are yours, quotation marks are not needed. However, since the ideas are not yours, the source must always be cited in order to avoid plagiarism.

You must Paraphrase:

- Lengthy discussions. Be careful in doing this. The idea is to reduce the discussion to its main ideas, but you have to be careful not to distort the original emphasis;
- Boring factual data (there's no need to quote verbatim);
- Wordiness in the original (when an author's ideas are important, but need condensing to fit clearly and concisely into your own argument).

Do not quote or paraphrase:

- General knowledge and commonly known facts that are available in many sources. This is information appearing in several sources and stated by numerous authors in the field, even though it may have been new to you. Do enough research to learn what is unique and what is not unique.

Summarizing

To summarize is to condense a significant amount of material and explain the main idea of that material briefly in your own words. The length of a summary depends on your topic and purpose, but summaries are typically short because summaries usually include

only the main points of a passage. To describe more than a main point, paraphrasing is more useful. Although the words in a summary are yours, the ideas are not and consequently the source must be cited so as to avoid plagiarizing.

Summarize:

- to avoid unnecessary details when the main point of a passage is all you need
- to show that you understand what the source is saying
- to give your audience a general introduction to the source
- to refresh the readers' memory if they have already read the source

Examples of Paraphrasing and Summarizing to Compare

Original Passage

“Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.” Lester, James D. *Writing Research Papers*. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47.

Paraphrase

Example: In research papers students often quote excessively, failing to keep quoted material down to the desirable level of 10% of the final draft. Since the problem usually originates during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded verbatim (Lester, 46-47).

Notice how this paraphrase covers more than just one main idea, including the desired level of quotes in a final draft and when the overquoting problem occurs.

Summary

Example: Students should take just a few notes in direct quotations from sources to help minimize the amount of quoted material in a research paper (Lester, 46-47).

Notice how this summary covers just one main idea- the need to reduce direct quotations in notes. It does not mention the 10% level, or the fact that students often overuse direct quotes in their notes.

Plagiarized Version

Example: Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the

final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

Notice how no citation is given for this restatement of the original passage and that the structure and vocabulary choice of this passage is very similar to the original. This version is plagiarized.

Sources:

Andrea Lunsford and Robert Connors. *St. Martin's Handbook*. 1992. Bedford/St. Martin's.

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"Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Worlds." Purdue University Online Writing Lab. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_paraphr.html

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Troyka, Lynn Quitman. *Simon & Shuster Handbook for Writers*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993.

Suggested handbooks and style guides:

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Fifth Edition. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999.

Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. Second Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

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Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Sixth Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996