

Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

Academic Writing often means integrating ideas from published sources into your own arguments. To do this, you can use direct quotes, paraphrase, and summarize. Paraphrasing and summarizing involve condensing the original source to focus the reader's attention on the specific ideas that support your argument.

Generally, **paraphrasing and summarizing are considered more sophisticated** than quoting because condensing the original source in those ways require a deeper understanding of the original source than simply quoting.

Summarizing

A summary is an overview of a text. The main idea is given, but details and examples are left out. The main purpose of summarizing is to reduce or condense a text to its most important ideas.

To write a good summary, you should follow this procedure:

1. Read the article to find the thesis statement. Read each section a few times to find the topic sentence for each paragraph and the supporting details within this paragraph.
2. Take notes in your own words: write down any significant fact or detail in your own words to minimize the risk of plagiarizing the article/essay you summarize.
3. Summarize each paragraph to make sure you know what its main point is.
4. Include the thesis and the writer's full name (or simply the last name) in the introduction.

5. Review your notes to provide main supporting details as they appear in the paragraphs. Only write information that is crucial to understand the content of the article/essay.
6. In your conclusion, restate the conclusion drawn by the writer of the original.
7. Always use the writer's tag to indicate that the information does not come from you. For example, include phrases like "Davis believes;" "Davis finds that;" "Davis expresses disbelief about."

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a way of presenting a text, keeping the same meaning, but using different words and phrasing. Paraphrasing is used with short sections of text, such as sentences or paragraphs.

To write a good paraphrase, you should:

1. Read the original text until you understand fully its meaning.
2. Set the original aside and write down what you remember about the text.
3. Check your version against the original to make sure you express the essential information accurately.
4. Use quotation marks to indicate any phrase or concept you borrowed from the original.
5. Record the source, with its page number, so you can easily indicate it if you need to incorporate it later into an essay.

Example:

Original Passage: "Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] 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*. Pearson, 2014, pp. 46-47.

Unacceptable Use of the Source: 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. It is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes.

NOTE: First, this passage has no citation. Furthermore, it uses too many words/phrases from the original and fails to change the structure of the sentences and paragraph.

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

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

Quoting

When you find information that helps support or develop your ideas about a topic, you may want to introduce your reader to this information by directly quoting a term, phrase, sentence, or longer excerpt from a source.

It can be tempting to fill your writing with the words of expert researchers and writers, but you should reserve direct quotations for those passages that are worded so uniquely or precisely that some meaning would be lost if you simply paraphrased the information. Try to limit the number of direct quotes in an essay to roughly 10% of the total word count.

Here are some tips to help you decide when to use quotations:

1. Quote if you the author's words are particularly brilliant, witty, edgy, distinctive, a good illustration of a point you are making, or otherwise interesting.
2. Quote if you are using a particularly authoritative source and you need the author's expertise to back up your point.
3. Quote if you are analyzing diction, tone, or a writer's use of a specific word or phrase.

4. Quote if you are taking a position that relies on the reader’s understanding exactly what another writer says about the topic.

Incorporating Quotations

Method 1: Use a signal phrase

Sometimes it works best to introduce a quotation by using a clear signal phrase—a phrase that explicitly attributes a quote to its author.

Examples:

Observing the tendency of young writers to give up on a piece of writing before it reaches its full potential, writer Natalie Goldberg declares, “push yourself beyond when you think you are done with what you have to say” (103).

As Goldberg explains, “sometimes when you think you are done, it is just the edge of the beginning” (103).

Helpful verbs to use in signal phrases:

The list of signal verbs below will help you integrate quotes into your sentences.

Acknowledges	Chronicles	Delineates	Highlights	Points out	Replies
Adds	Claims	Denies	Hypothesizes	Posits	Reports
Admits	Comments	Discloses	Illustrates	Purports	Responds
Advances	Compares	Discounts	Implies	Reasons	Reveals
Affirms	Concludes	Disputes	Indicates	Recounts	States
Agrees	Concurs	Documents	Insists	Refers	Submits
Alludes to	Confirms	Emphasizes	Maintains	Reflects	Suggests
Argues	Contends	Explains	Narrates	Refutes	Supports
Asserts	Contrasts	Expresses	Negates	Reiterates	Theorizes
Attests to	Declares	Extrapolates	Notes	Relates	Writes
Characterizes	Defines	Grants	Observes	Remarks	Verifies

Method 2: Embed the quotation

Another option when quoting from a source is to embed the quote into a sentence; in other words, you can structure your sentence so that it leads naturally into the quotation. If you do this, make sure that the grammatical structure of the sentence including the quotation is correct. Your wording should lead into the quotation so seamlessly that if you read your sentence aloud, it would be impossible for someone listening to determine where your wording ended and the quotation's wording began.

Examples:

Discussing the importance of specificity in writing, Natalie Goldberg maintains that we should “give things the dignity of their names” (70).

Indeed, when writing the word “‘geranium’ instead of ‘flower,’ you are penetrating more deeply into the present and being there” (Goldberg 71).

Method 3: Use a complete sentence followed by a colon

The final option for introducing a quotation is to attach the quote to a complete sentence using a colon. This method works well when you want to pair a statement with a quotation that directly exemplifies or parallels the statement.

Examples:

Goldberg urges writers to listen to their intuition and instincts: “first thoughts are the mind reflecting experiences—as close as a human being can get in words to the sunset, the birth, the bobby pin, the crocus” (68).

It can be difficult for a writer to get a clear perspective on a recent composition: “the best test of a piece of writing is over time” (Goldberg 158).

Using Block Quotes

A block quote is used for direct quotations that are longer than four lines of text.

The block format is a freestanding quote that does not include quotation marks. Introduce the block quote with a colon (unless the context of your quote requires different punctuation) and start it on a new line. Indent the entire quote 1-inch from the left margin and double-space it (even if the rest of your paper is not double-spaced). Include the page number at the end of your block quote outside of the ending period. Also include the author's last name, date of publication, and page number(s)/paragraph number.

Example:

Harry is constructed as the antithesis of Voldemort and is bound to him in numerous ways: the lightning-bolt scar on his forehead is the most obvious, as are Harry's ability to speak Parsel tongue and his wand, which is an exact counterpart of Voldemort's. Like Frodo Baggins, Harry is the reluctant hero who must act as the instrument of absolute good, even at the risk of his own life, to defeat the instrument of absolute evil (Chevelier p. 339)