



Paraphrasing and Quoting Responsibly

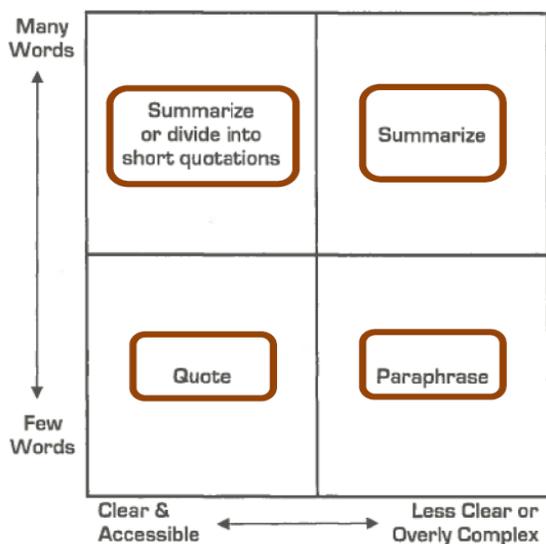
Everything you write in an academic paper is assumed to be your own **words**, thoughts, analysis, data, and images **unless** you tell your reader it is someone else's, or it is common knowledge. Incorporating source material responsibly means understanding not only how to cite information, but also when and how to summarize, paraphrase, or quote.

When to Summarize, Paraphrase, or Quote

To summarize means to explain an overarching or complex idea briefly and succinctly in your own words.

To paraphrase means to describe a source's passage completely in your own words, and with your own sentence structure. Changing a source's words here and there, or adding words to a source's sentence, is known as "patchwork" or "mosaic" plagiarism—it is *not* proper paraphrasing.

To quote means to take a source's words directly/verbatim. Generally, directly borrowed language of about five words or more must appear between quotation marks. Many citation styles require page numbers for direct quote citations.



Source: Harris, R. A. (2001). *Using Sources Effectively*, 3rd ed. Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing.

NOTE: Whether summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting, *always cite the source!*

Summarize when you want to provide a simplified, generalized explanation of detailed or lengthy information. Summarize, for example, a complex description of how internet use has evolved over many years.

Paraphrase when a source's passage is complex or written in a way that doesn't match your writing style. Paraphrase, for example, a short paragraph describing new DOD policy.

Use a **quote** when information is clear, accessible, and brief, or when language is particularly powerful or of historic importance. Quote, for example, a precisely worded definition, legally binding declaration, controversial statement, or impactful line from a famous speech or interview.

It is **necessary** to either **directly quote or paraphrase/summarize** source information when:

- A sentence or phrase *of about five words or more in a row* borrows descriptive language, sentence structure, and style from another writer (in which case quote the borrowed text, or paraphrase from scratch).
- A source's idea or explanation can reasonably be put into your own words without changing the core meaning.
- Note: While common knowledge generally *does not* need to be cited, it *does* need to be cited and quoted if it borrows specific language directly from a source. Paraphrased common knowledge *does not* need to be cited.

It is **NOT necessary** to directly quote or paraphrase source information when it is:

- Well-paraphrased and summarized common knowledge.
- Dictated proper nouns, dates, key terms, specific data points, equations, lists of unalterable attributes, or field-specific common language that cannot reasonably be paraphrased without changing the meaning.



Why and How to Paraphrase Properly

Paraphrasing allows you to strategically incorporate information through the lens of your paper (your specific focus, audience, and argument) and your lens as a writer (your voice and style). Paraphrasing can illustrate your ability to think critically about a topic. In contrast, direct quotes do not demonstrate *your analysis* or your intended use of source material and, thus, direct quotes must be followed by more original analysis than paraphrased material.

Steps toward a proper paraphrase:

1. Actively read source text until you truly understand the information.
 2. Take notes in your own words, using quotation marks to indicate key terms and borrowed phrases/language.
 3. Working from your notes—*not* the original source—craft sentences using your own voice, language, and structure.
- * Tip: If your paraphrased sentence is too close to the original, start by finding the sentence’s **primary subject and verb**. Then, using your own knowledge of the topic, reframe the sentence with these terms but from a new angle.

Original Passage	Insufficient Paraphrase	Proper Paraphrase
<p>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.</p> <p>Source: Lester, J. D. (1976). <i>Writing research papers</i>, 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, p. 45.</p>	<p>Students* often use too many** direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final 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 (Lester, 1976).</p> <p>*Blue language matches source **Underlined language is synonymous with matching sentence structure</p>	<p>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, 1976).</p>

Adapted from Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). Paraphrasing: Write it in your own words. Retrieved January 30, 2017, from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/1/>

Formatting Rules for Direct Quotes

- Generally, not more than 10 percent of a paper should be directly quoted material; the majority of text in a paper should be your own: paraphrased and summarized material, and your own data, analysis, and justifications for your choices.
- Use **block quotations** when quoting 5+ lines of text: indent the text, single space it, and do not use quotation marks.
- Use **[brackets]** around clarifying language you have changed or added into a direct quote. However, if you find you must frequently add or change language to clarify, it may be best to paraphrase the information instead.

Example: Well into the nineteenth century, as political scientist Mavis Bachman discovered, “the word [democracy] was repeatedly used by conservatives to smear opponents of all kinds” (2014, p. 32).
- Use an **ellipsis** to indicate if you drop the source’s words mid-sentence.

Example: “We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union ... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”⁵⁶
- “For quotes within quotes, use **‘single quotation marks’** for the inside pair.”
- Insert **[sic]** into a direct quote to indicate an error was the source author’s and not your own. You do not need to use [sic] to indicate a variant spelling—for example, if quoting a British source that spells “color” as “colour.”

Example: Historian Charles Bear argued in 1999 that “most of the drafters of the Constitution viewed demorcacy [sic] as something rather to be dreaded than [sic] encouraged” (p. 407).
- Insert (emphasis added) “If you **change formatting** (*italics*, **boldface**, underline, etc.) that did not appear in the original source, indicating so after the closing quotation marks” (emphasis added).

