

## What are the Differences Among Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing?

A **quote** is the **exact wording** of the source material (either written or spoken). Quotes match the original source **word for word**.

A **paraphrase** is a **detailed restatement in your own words** of a written or sometimes spoken source material. Apart from the changes in organization, wording, and sentence structure, the paraphrase should be nearly identical in meaning to the original passage. It should also be near the same length as the original passage and present the details of the original.

A **summary** is a **condensed version of a passage**. Similar to paraphrasing, summarizing involves using your own words and writing style to express another author's ideas. Unlike the paraphrase, which presents important details, the summary presents only the most important ideas of the passage.

### When Should I Use Quotes?

Using quotations is the easiest way to include source material, but quotations should be used carefully and sparingly. While paraphrasing and summarizing provide the opportunity to show your understanding of the source material, quoting may only show your ability to type it. There are a few very good reasons that you might want to use a quote rather than a paraphrase or summary:

1. *Accuracy*: You are unable to paraphrase or summarize the source material without changing the author's intent
2. *Authority*: You may want to use a quote to lend expert authority for your assertion or to provide source material for analysis.
3. *Conciseness*: Your attempts to paraphrase or summarize are awkward or much longer than the source material.
4. *Unforgettable language*: You believe that the words of the author are memorable or remarkable because of their effectiveness or historical

flavor. Additionally, the author may have used a unique phrase or sentence, and you want to comment on words or phrases themselves.

### **When Should I Paraphrase?**

You will want to paraphrase or summarize when the **wording** of the source is **less important than the meaning** of the source. The paraphrase and summary allow you to maintain continuity of style in your paper and show your mastery of source material. A paraphrase may be preferred to a summary because paraphrases are more detailed and specific. You may use the paraphrase often for the following reasons:

- *To change the organization of ideas for emphasis.* You may have to change the organization of ideas in source material so that you can emphasize the points that are most related to your paper. You should remember to be faithful to the meaning of the source.
- *To simplify the material.* You may have to simplify complex arguments, sentences, or vocabulary.
- *To clarify the material.* You may have to clarify technical passages or specialized information into language that is appropriate for your audience.

### **When Should I Summarize?**

Again, you will want to paraphrase or summarize when the wording of the source is less important than the meaning of the source. A summary may be preferred to a paraphrase because summaries can provide a brief overview of a text. You may use the summary often for the following reasons:

- *To condense the material.* You may have to condense or to reduce the source material to draw out the points that relate to your paper.
- *To omit extras from the material.* You may have to omit extra information from the source material to focus on the author's main points.
- *To simplify the material.* You may have to simplify the most important complex arguments, sentences, or vocabulary in the source material.