Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

This resource is designed to teach you quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing skills as well give you guidelines for when to use which technique.

In order to assist you in deciding whether to quote, paraphrase, or summarize, refer to the following information:

**Quote:**
When you quote, you use the exact words of the author.

**Reasons for using quotations**

- Some writers have created such unique wording that changing it may interfere with the meaning.
- You may use a quote for emphasis.
- You want to use an opinion that differs from yours or a different perspective.
- You want to represent someone whose ideas are vastly different from others in the field.
- You exert your authority or credibility when you quote—quoting sources shows your readers that you have done your research.
- You want to represent a fair argument, so you would quote those who are in disagreement with your own stance.

**How to quote**

- You will use the source’s exact words, punctuation, spelling, and usage.
- You place quotation marks around the entire quote “”.
- You must have the author’s bibliographical information on your source-cited page.
- Do not rely too heavily on quotations—it will look as though you have written a paper that is full of someone else’s ideas.
- Introduce the quote by using a signal verb or phrase (see table on page 3) followed by the author’s last name with the year of publication enclosed in parentheses.
- Your purpose for using the quote must be available. Follow the quote with some comment that makes clear to your reader why you are using that quote.
- If you change a word or phrase from the original quote to make the quote fit better with your signal verb, you should use brackets [ ] to offset where you added a word or phrase or changed a capital to a lower case letter with brackets. If you are omitting part of a quote, you will signal your reader by using ellipses. You should never use ellipses at the beginning or the end of a quotation.

*Note:* If you use brackets to signal that you have added or taken away a word or phrase or added a capital or lower case letter, or used ellipses to indicate that you have removed some of the original quote, be certain that by doing so you are not changing the author’s original meaning.
Paraphrase:
When you paraphrase, you are putting the source in your own words.

Reasons for paraphrasing

- Restating the main idea of a portion of a text.
- Simplifying a complex idea.
- Restating significant data especially from a graph chart.
- Emphasizing your own understanding of the text.
- Incorporating the text into the body of existing knowledge.

How to paraphrase

- Read the original works. Without looking at the original, restate in your own words what the original version says. You will, in your own words and sentence structure, state the meaning of the original works.
  1. Include the main points and details from the original and in the same order that the author presents them.
- Do not simply substitute synonyms for the existing quote or use the original author’s style—this is cheating.
- When you paraphrase, you must use the author’s name and in parenthesis the year the works was published.
- Always explain the significance of the source material.

Summary:
Summarizing is important because it allows you to use put into your own words the important information.

Reasons to summarize

- Incorporating summary is important if the main points are significant but the details are not significant.
- Creating an overview of a larger work for the purpose of situating your argument in that work.
- Emphasizing the summary of existing scholarship in your text.

How to summarize:

- Keep the summary as brief as possible.
- Do not distort the meaning.
- If you use any of the original sources words, enclose those words in quotation marks.
- Introduce the summary with the name of the author and in parenthesis the year of the publication.
Signal Verbs for introducing quotes, paraphrases, and summaries

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Refer to the citation style that you are using to determine which tense of the signal verb that you will use: MLA—present tense; APA—past tense.