

Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Citing

The decision of whether to use direct quotations or to paraphrase depends on the purpose of the information. The type of writing is also a factor in determining the way source material is included. For example, a literary analysis may rely heavily on quotations to best capture the spirit of the original work, while a research essay may omit quotations in favour of a broader summary of the material.

Quotations

Whenever unaltered information is used in a paper or assignment, that sentence or group of sentences must be situated within double quotation marks (“ ”) and followed by a citation. By doing so, the reader knows that the text within the double quotations is the work of the original author. The citation also provides the reader with enough information to find the original material, where they may read the passage in context.

Quote original text to do the following:

- Capture the exact words of an author when particularly eloquent or already concise
- Emphasize an author’s perspective (rather than simply an understanding of an author’s perspective)

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is helpful to clarify and condense a passage or theory from another scholar, critic, or theorist. However, it is not sufficient to simply change a few words or rearrange a few sentences. In order to properly paraphrase, the information must be restated by the student in his or her own words. A citation must still be included with the paraphrased material, which credits the original author and source of the information. When paraphrasing, do not use quotation marks unless using the original author’s exact words.

Paraphrase to do the following:

- Condense long and complex passages
- Demonstrate an understanding of the material
- Maintain a consistent flow in writing style

The following tips may prove helpful when paraphrasing original material:

- Identify the idea(s) or key points of the passage
- Think about how information can be explained to someone who is unfamiliar with the author’s work
- Put the original text aside (do not look at it)
- Write the author’s idea(s) using your own words and writing style
- Check the original to make sure that the paraphrasing conveys the author’s idea(s) without mirroring the original text too closely

Citations

Citations are necessary for an author to show the reader where the information came from. In addition to avoiding accusations of plagiarism, there are three main reasons for including citations:

- Giving credit to the source of the information used in a paper. When ideas can be traced to a particular individual, the original author has ownership of those ideas. This does not mean that other authors cannot use the concepts, but it is plagiarism to use them without acknowledging the scholar to whom they belong.
- Providing readers with the opportunity to check sources used in the writing. This enables the reader to check the context of quotations or get further information on an interesting topic. By allowing readers to check the original source of information, a writer adds credibility to any analyses or conclusions reached.
- Protecting the writer from errors or false data present within source material. While all scholars are responsible for ensuring that their data is as accurate as possible, it is inevitable that some information will be found to be false. If a scholarly source proves to be inaccurate, attributing the false information to its proper source can prevent accusations of producing low-quality work.

Styles of citation vary from field to field. Some instructors may want in-text citations that appear in the body of the writing immediately following quoted material; others may prefer footnotes or endnotes, placing all references at the bottom of the page or at the end of the paper, respectively. No matter the citation style, nearly all instructors will require a full list of sources used in a *Bibliography* and/or *Works Cited* section at the end of a paper.

The information that needs to be included depends on the citation format preferred by the professor or department. The following are the most common formats requested:

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Modern Languages Association (MLA)
- Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago)

Resources on using these and other formats can be found at the Writing Centre and the Patrick Power Library.