Using Evidence in your Research Paper: Quoting, Summarizing & Paraphrasing

Quoting, summarizing and paraphrasing are great ways to show academic evidence in your paper. These techniques have similarities and differences, and you will likely use all three when you write.

Quoting	Paraphrasing	Summarizing
Copied exactly from the text.	Written in **your own words**, conveying the idea that the original author is communicating in a passage, paragraph, etc. Uses your own writing voice and style.	Written in **your own words**: a condensed version of the main idea of the text. Includes key academic terms but does not use the original author's sentences.
Must be introduced and followed by discussion.	Should fit seamlessly into your discussion.	Gives a broad overview of a topic.
Enclosed in quotation marks.	No quotation marks.	No quotation marks.
Must be cited.	**Must be cited.**	**Must be cited.**
"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" (Lester 1976: 46)	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).	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 1976).

Examples from: http://www.mesacc.edu/~paoih30491/ArgumentsQuoteSummarizeParaphr.html

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Tip: Changing some words and reorganizing sentence structure is not **paraphrasing**. You must write about the author's idea completely in your own words in order to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

Balancing research with your own arguments

Many students worry that they cite too often, making it seem as though their paper is just a collection of others' ideas. This isn't exactly true. If you look closely at the articles you are reading in class, you will see that the author's use numerous citations. This is normal in academic writing.

On the other hand, in order to show your professor that you have looked critically at the research and have come up with your own ideas you should not just quote and paraphrase others' work. It *is* important to analyze, interpret and criticize the existing research rather than simply restating, summarizing, and detailing it.

Resource created by Rebecca Shaw

Students should choose the quotations and paraphrases they use carefully and selectively. Before you include a quote or paraphrase, consider whether it is really necessary: is it doing a useful job as evidence for a statement or argument that you are making?

Integrating quotations

A quotation should be introduced by a sentence that also makes a claim or illustrates the author's claim. In addition, following the quotation, you should discuss how the author's words illustrate your argument. Make sure the connection is clear.

> **Tip:** Quote sparingly and avoid **quoting** whole passages unless absolutely necessary. You want your reader to easily understand what idea your quote is supporting; including long quotations that include additional information that is not pertinent to your argument can be confusing.

Example:

A Writing Centre tutor, Rebecca, argues that good grammar creates clarity in writing: "the meaning of a sentence can be altered with even the simplest grammar mistake" (2005, p. 576). This supports the importance of careful proofreading not only for spelling but to ensure that the meaning of each sentence is clear to the reader. When you are proofreading your paper and notice that a sentence is unclear, this may be due to a fixable grammar error.

Note-taking for accurate citations

When you are reading literature for a paper, you should make note of the author, title, year of publication, page number, etc. It's easier to do this as you go along than try to find it later. When I am researching a paper I create a header on the page where I am making notes which includes the full citation for the source, and include page numbers down the margin so that I know where in the source the note came from. Also, use the margin to draw arrows between related points and to make notes on how the information connects to your own paper. I use APA for my papers, but you might also be asked to use other styles, e.g. MLA or Chicago.

> **Hart, J. (2011). Scene. Storycraft: the complete guide to writing narrative nonfiction (pp. 89-105). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.**
>
> **p. 91**   -readers filter details through their own experience, creating unique, emotional interpretations of the scene
> -proven in brain psychology & human memory tests
> -Writers' mission not to describe reality, but tap into reader's head – stimulate emotions/memories
>
> **p. 92**   -used in non-fiction and fiction
> -5000 word approx. narrative only needs 3-4 scenes/settings, carefully chosen

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