



Citing Sources

Citing provides **support** for your claims and adds **credibility** to you and your writing. It also gives multiple viewpoints on a particular subject, calls attention to your argument, and helps you become a stronger writer because it helps you to critically think about the information you are using.

You *need* to cite:

- When you use another person's idea, opinion, or theory.
- When you repeat any facts, statistics, graphs, or drawings that are not common knowledge.
- When you quote or paraphrase another person's actual spoken or written words.
- When you summarize content .

Paraphrasing, Quoting, and Summarizing

Paraphrasing

A paraphrase retains *all* the detail from the section of original source that it cites. Paraphrases are a great asset when you must retain all of the detail for your reader to review while showing you have understood the information.

- Putting a passage into your own words, paraphrasing is a restatement of the original content using your own unique language.
- It is usually the same length as the original passage, but it doesn't always have to be.
- Paraphrasing well shows that a writer has a clear ability to digest and disseminate information.
- Paraphrasing must also cite the original source.

Quoting

Quoted information is often used to study the original text rather than a topic. When analyzing, quoting helps provide sections of the original work to support your argument and enhance your ethos.

- It is identical to the original content, and matches word-for-word.
- Quotes must cite the original source. Remember that the period goes after the parenthetical citations for non-block quote formats.

Example: "Students overuse direct quotation in taking notes" (Kirk 1976, p. 46).

- **Brackets** can be used [around words] in quotations that come from you rather than from the original source. It's helpful to use these in situations where context is unclear without them.

Example: McCoy said, "I really like [her] very much!"

- **Ellipses** indicate to the reader that you have omitted words that were present in the original text.

Example: "He wore his shoes...very carefully" (Spock, 2014, p.1).

Summarizing

Summaries are used to provide a condensed version of information before making an argument or providing a basis on which claims are made. It typically has less detail than paraphrased information. A summary focuses on *the most relevant material* for your argument and omits the rest. They tend to be broad.

- A successful summary puts the main idea of the article into your own words, but only including the main points of the article.
- A summary is often shorter than the original work.
- Summaries must also cite the original source.



General Advice

Ask yourself what your main goal is in referencing outside sources.

- If you are analyzing the writing or word choice made by the content creator, **quote** the text directly.
- If you are focusing on content to preface an argument, then **summarize**.
- If you wish to reveal details to the reader which are salient for your analysis, use **paraphrasing**.

How do I paraphrase?

1. Read the text to get the meaning and locate the information you wish to focus on.
2. If you are having trouble grasping the information, pretend you are explaining it to a friend. How would you share this information? What language would you use?
3. Keeping this explanation in your mind, write down what you said without referencing the original text.
4. Check your work to see if it retained the meaning from the original. Does it make sense? Did you thoroughly include all the relevant information?
5. Compare your writing to the source. Does it emulate the original too much? This is a great place to get creative—use this as an opportunity to brainstorm and see what else you can say if this is the case. Don't hesitate to use a thesaurus or transitions to customize your work. Read it again to make sure that you've retained your own unique voice.

Example:

Original Passage:

“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, p. 46).

A legitimate paraphrase:

In research papers, students often rely on quoting to cite their sources. To avoid quoting, students should look at their passage and limit the amount of word-for-word notes they are taking. It is important for students to focus on putting concepts in their own words (Lester, 1976, p. 46).

Explanation: In the above paraphrase, the material is was read by a student, and then put into their own words. It does not retain the language patterns and repetition of the former text. It was correctly cited at the end.

A plagiarized version:

Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final paper. Moreover, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of exact source material copied while taking notes (Lester, 1976, p. 46).

Explanation: The above would be plagiarized because it retains the same order of the original passage, and even copies some of the words, like “only about 10%.” The legitimate paraphrase does not do any of this, but retains a concise and clear meaning of the original passage.

**Paraphrasing Tips:**

- Use alternative wording to the author's throughout your paraphrasing (you can use a thesaurus). Substitute synonyms for words in the original work, but make sure the language in your text is appropriate.
- Make sure the sentence structure is your own and combine or divide sentences if necessary.
- Change the order around as long as it still makes sense.

How do I integrate quotes? (Integrate and sandwich!)

1. Write one sentence to introduce the quotation—quotes should typically not appear without prior context.
2. Determine what words you are going to quote. Do you need to use ellipses to consolidate words? Do you need to add information in brackets to give context to the reader that they may miss otherwise?
3. After the quote you should comment on the significance and integrate it into your argument or discussion.

Example:

Original Passage:

“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, p. 46).

Quotation: These issues are precisely why Lester (1976) reports that, “Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final paper. Probably only about 10% of [their] final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore [they] should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes” (p. 46).

The above integrates a transition that leads into the quote. The use of brackets to switch pronouns (from “you” to “they”) allows the reader to better understand the context of the quoted material when compared to the text.

How do I summarize?

1. Skim the article to understand the purpose and main points. When you read, look for context. Ask yourself: is the author credible? What are other counter claims? How does the author connect with the audience?). You want to be able to write out the main idea.
2. Read the article again carefully underlining, marking, and dividing it into sections or paragraphs. Label what happens in each section.
3. Write out the main/central idea. Write out the purpose of the article or story.
4. Take your main ideas (the purpose of the article) and look over your notes/labels. Start adding details.
5. Read over your summary and revise if necessary.

Example:

Original Passage:

“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, p. 46).

Summary:

Students should take only a few notes in their margins to help them minimize the amount of quoted material in their research papers (Lester, 1976, p. 46).

Further Assistance: For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library, or call 815-836-5427.