



Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting

Paraphrasing, summarising and quoting are three ways of incorporating the research and views of others into your academic writing. The work of other authors can be used to provide additional information and evidence and can be used to support the argument that your writing is trying to convey.

What are the differences?

All three techniques must be used and referenced correctly to make sure you avoid plagiarism in your writing.

Paraphrasing	Summarising	Quoting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not match the source word for word. • is often similar in length, sometimes slightly longer than the original. • conveys all the information from the source in a different form. • demonstrates to the reader that you understand what you have read and that you can apply this knowledge. • must reference the source correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not match source word for word. • briefly outlines the main points of the source in your own words. • is shorter than the original, possibly one paragraph or just a few words. • must reference the source correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matches the source word for word. • should be kept as brief as possible. • must reference the source correctly, including details of the page, paragraph or section from which it has been copied.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the best way to incorporate the research and views of others in your own work. By rewriting the ideas in your own words, the smooth flow of your writing is not disrupted and a deeper engagement with your reading is achieved.

How to paraphrase

1. Read and re-read the passage of text several times to gain a good understanding.
2. Jot down your own version and make sure you capture the meaning.
3. Change the order of information to emphasise your point or clarify.
4. Check to make sure you haven't used the same words or phrases (except technical terms) and that you haven't changed the meaning.
5. Change the grammatical form (verbs, nouns), vocabulary and order of information so that the new passage is very different from the original.
6. Edit and proofread.
7. Reference correctly.

Paraphrasing successfully means changing both the structure of the sentences and the words used without changing the meaning.

Tips for paraphrasing

- ✓ Consider replacing keywords with synonyms where appropriate (not for technical or subject-specific terms). Use a thesaurus.
- ✓ Consider changing the sentence structure of the paragraph/s. Change the order of sentences providing the overall meaning isn't affected.
- ✓ Consider changing from:
 - Active voice: the subject performs the action, e.g. "The teacher used effective communication strategies to engage the students".
 - Passive voice: the subject receives the action, e.g. "Effective communication strategies were used to engage the students".

Summarising

Summarising is similar to paraphrasing in that you are incorporating the research and views of others in your work but limiting your writing to the main points of the source text. Be sure to capture the meaning of the main points of the text and to avoid adding your own ideas when doing so.

How to summarise

1. Read and re-read the passage of text several times to gain a good understanding.
2. While reading, jot down the main points that the author is making in the passage.
3. Record the main points in point form, leaving out examples and evidence.
4. Write the summary from the notes you have taken without referring back to the original text.
5. Compare your summary with the original to make sure you haven't used the same words or phrases (except technical terms) and that none of the meaning of the main points has been changed.
6. Edit and proofread.
7. Reference correctly.

Tips for summarising

- ✓ Only include the main points.
- ✓ Use your own words.

Quoting

Quoting is the use of the exact words of others in your writing to support your ideas. Quoting directly from the work of others is only allowable when it is clearly obvious to the reader that those words are not your own and the quoted materials are presented and referenced correctly.

How to quote the work of others correctly in APA style

1. For short quotes (<40 words), insert the text word for word into your writing using "quotation marks" at the beginning and end of the copied text.
2. For longer quotes (>40 words), insert the passage word for word into your writing as a block of freestanding text with quotation marks omitted.
3. To quote a text, use double quotation marks, and for quotations within quotations, use single quotation marks. Otherwise, the copied text must be an exact copy of the original.
4. Include an in-text citation with author, year and page, paragraph or section identifier at the end of the direct quote.
5. Include the source text in your reference list correctly at the end of your writing.

For APA guides see [referencing](#)

Tips for quoting

- ✓ Direct quotes should be kept as brief as possible.
- ✓ Paraphrasing and summarising should be used in preference to direct quoting where possible, as using direct quotes doesn't demonstrate as high a level of understanding in the subject matter and can disrupt the personal style and natural flow of your writing.

Importance of correct referencing

Whether you are paraphrasing, summarising or quoting, you are still communicating the work and ideas of others into your writing.

Referencing correctly will allow you to:

- ✓ use the ideas of others to inform and support your argument
- ✓ identify what part of your work communicates your own ideas, and what ideas come from others
- ✓ benefit from the increased credibility that this gives your writing, and you'll score a higher mark in the process!

[More about referencing](#)

[How to avoid plagiarism](#)

Reach out for help

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- ask a question on our [Ask an Academic Skills Adviser forum](#),
- join one of our [Academic Skills workshops](#), or
- access further information about all of our available services and learning resources, including assignment writing feedback, at csu.edu.au/academicskills.