

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting from Sources

You create a **summary** when you take all or part of a work from another writer (a passage from a Web site, a section of an article, a chapter, an entire article or book...) and

- Condense what the author is saying, creating a much more concise version that focuses in on the author's main point(s) in your own words.
- If choosing to retain key phrases or terms from the original, put these in quotation marks.
 - When you work this summary into your paper, you need to introduce the author and possibly reference the book or article in a “signal phrase” using the present tense (Aaron 466).
See the other side of this page for examples and a list of verbs you might use. →

You **paraphrase** when you take a specific passage from another writer and

- Recast the content and ideas of the author entirely in your own words—without quoting—and with different sentence structures.
- Write the paraphrase the approximate length of the original.
- Avoid “plagiaphrasing,” which is “changing only a few words in the original and then including the text as your own. Plagiaphrasing describes a writer’s use of *almost* the same words as in the original source” (Keene and Adams 181). *This is a very common form of plagiarism.
 - Introduce the author and possibly reference the title of the book, article, or other source through a “signal phrase” using the present tense (Aaron 466).
 - Cite the page number using a parenthetical citation format.

You **quote** when you reproduce a statement from another writer and

- Use quotation marks around words, phrases, sentences, passages, or paragraphs taken from the other writer’s work, making sure the quotation is accurate--word-for-word, comma-for-comma.
- Use square brackets to indicate any words you add for clarification (The witness claimed that “he [the suspect] didn’t do it”) or small changes—like making the first letter in a word letter lower case instead of Upper Case—that make the quote fit more smoothly into your sentence (see the second example on the other side of this sheet). You can also make additions to the quotation or changes *if they do not affect its meaning*.
- Insert ellipsis marks (...) to show where you cut unnecessary words or content from a quotation (Van Rys, *et al.* 155), as in this example: In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln refers back to the Declaration of Independence when he says “Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth...a new nation...dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”
 - Introduce the author and possibly reference the book or article through a “signal phrase” (Aaron 466).
 - Cite the page number using a parenthetical citation format.

Helpful Online Resources

“Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing” page: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/>

“MLA 2009 Formatting and Style Guide” page: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Works Cited

Aaron, Jane E. *LB Brief*, 3rd ed. New York: Longman, 2008. Print.

Keene, Michael L, & Adams, Katherine. H.. *Easy Access*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006. Print.

Van Rys, John, Verne Meyer, & Pat Sebranek. *The Business Writer*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. Print.

Integrating Quotations in Your Paper

Use “signal phrases” when you integrate other people’s words and ideas into your paper. After the quotation, paraphrase, or summary, provide an in-text citation (in parentheses) following the guidelines appropriate to the citation style you have chosen to use (Aaron 466). Signal phrases provide a context, so whether you identify the author, describe his/her credentials, or give the title of the source depends on *why* you are bringing these authors, ideas or data into the discussion. The examples below use **MLA** style citations.

Here are five ways to introduce quotations:

- Example: Wendell Berry proposes, “Real education is determined by community needs, not by public tests” (14). *Here we introduce the statement by referencing the author (Wendell Berry) and using a verb in the present tense (“proposes”) followed by a comma.*
- Example: Carl Honoré, in his book *In Praise of Slowness*, stresses that “[i]nstead of doing everything faster, many people are decelerating, and finding Slowness helps them to live, work, think and play better” (274). *Here we integrate a quotation by referencing the work and author and using a present tense verb followed by “that.”*
- Example: Mike Rose, who is a strong voice for first generation college students, makes us think differently about errors in student writing: “Error marks the place where education begins” (189). *Here we use a complete sentence followed by a colon to introduce the quotation.*
- Example: “Rudeness,” relates the philosopher Eric Hoffer, “is the weak man’s imitation of strength” (42). *Here we have broken the quotation in two and use a signal phrase in the middle.*
- Example: “Of all the things we do need to know about grammar, the verb is first,” advises Don Watson in *Death Sentences* (17). *Here we start with the statement and use a signal phrase at the end.*

The verbs in your signal phrases can clarify what the authors you cite are *doing* in a particular quotation, paraphrase or summary. Are they, for example, *defending* a position, *reporting* data, or *highlighting* a key point? You can also use well-chosen verbs to help the reader understand what *you* are doing and how the data or opinions or arguments made by these authors affect *your* argument or conclusions: Example: Considering how much difference the right verb can make in a sentence, I **agree** with Watson that they are worthy of attention.

Verbs for Signal Phrases (Choose with care. These are *not* interchangeable synonyms.)

accepts	acknowledges	adds	admits
affirms	agrees	argues	analyzes
asks	asserts	assesses	avers
believes	belittles	bemoans	cautions
comments	complains	compares	concludes
condemns	confirms	considers	contradicts
contrasts	criticizes	declares	defends
denies	deplores	deprecates	derides
describes	discusses	disagrees	enumerates
emphasizes	explains	grants	highlights
holds	hypothesizes	identifies	illustrates
insists	interprets	laments	lists
maintains	measures	observes	outlines
points out	praises	predicts	proposes
proves	refutes	rejects	reports
responds	reveals	says	states
shares	shows	speculates	summarizes
stresses	studies	suggests	warns
supports	supposes	urges	writes