

Summarize, Paraphrase, or Quote?

A **summary** is a relatively brief, objective account, in your own words, of the main ideas in a source passage.

Summarize to:

- *To condense the material.* You may have to *condense* or to reduce the source material to draw out the points that relate to your paper.
- *To omit extras from the material.* You may have to *omit* extra information from the source material to focus on the author's main points.
- *To simplify the material.* You may have to *simplify* the most important complex arguments, sentences, or vocabulary in the source material.

A **paraphrase** is a restatement, in your own words, of a passage of text. Its structure reflects the structure of the source passage. Paraphrases are sometimes the same length as the source passage, sometimes shorter. In certain cases--particularly if the source passage is difficult to read--the paraphrase may be even longer than the original. . . . Keep in mind that only an occasional word (but not whole phrases) from the original source appears in the paraphrase, and that a paraphrase's sentence structure does not reflect that of the source. **Paraphrase to:**

- *To change the organization of ideas for emphasis.* You may have to change the organization of ideas in source material so that you can emphasize the points that are most related to your paper. You should remember to be faithful to the meaning of the source.
- *To simplify the material.* You may have to *simplify* complex arguments, sentences, or vocabulary.
- *To clarify the material.* You may have to *clarify* technical passages or specialized information into language that is appropriate for your audience.

A **quotation** uses the exact words of the original. Use Quotes to show:

1. *Accuracy:* You are unable to paraphrase or summarize the source material without changing the author's intent.
2. *Authority:* You may want to use a quote to lend expert authority for your assertion or to provide source material for analysis.
3. *Conciseness:* Your attempts to paraphrase or summarize are awkward or much longer than the source material.
4. *Unforgettable language:* You believe that the words of the author are memorable or remarkable because of their effectiveness or historical flavor. Additionally, the author may have used a unique phrase or sentence, and you want to comment on words or phrases themselves.