

# Using Summaries, Quotes and Paraphrases- Introducing Outside Information

**Summary** - Condense the author's ideas to a more **concise and brief** statement, retelling in your own words, without original thoughts or interpretations

- Read the original passage carefully, highlighting or underlining what you take to be the main points
- Start your summary with a **signal phrase** which identifies the type of work, title, and author
- Describe the main points, using your own words, in the present tense. Think about trying to answer questions such as: **Who, What, When, Where, and How**
- Periodically remind your reader that this is a summary by using phrases such as *the article claims, the author suggests*
- **Never put any of your own opinions or interpretations into the summary**
- Summaries are used when writing an annotated bibliography or an abstract for a research paper or lab report

## **Example of a Summary**

In the short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," author James Thurber humorously presents a character who fantasizes about himself as a hero enduring incredibly challenging circumstances. In his real life, Walter Mitty lives an ordinary, plain life; he is a husband under the control of an overbearing, critical wife. Thurber uses lively dialogue to give readers an understanding of Mitty's character. The story takes place over a period of about twenty minutes; during this brief time, Mitty drives his wife to the hairdresser and runs errands that his wife has given him. In between worrying that he is not doing what she wants correctly, he daydreams about himself as a great surgeon, brilliant repair technician, expert marksman, and brave military captain.

**Using a Signal Phrase** – a signal phrase connects the material that is being incorporated from an outside source to the argument made by the essay or paper.

- it can also help readers **assess the quality** (positive or negative) of the information by mentioning the credentials or reputation of the author or the publication information of the source, for example:
  - o According to Madeleine Albright, former United States Secretary of State, . . .
  - o As reported by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) , . . .

**Quote** - Copy the author's language **word for word**

- Use a quote when the author has expressed his/her **idea** so completely, clearly, and coherently and it emphasizes the topics in your paper so eloquently, that you don't want to change a word.
- To introduce the quote, include a sentence that refers to the author or source in a **signal phrase** and give it context by connecting it to the point of the paragraph.
- *To avoid plagiarism:*
  - o Use quotation marks around the author's words and add an **in-text citation** at the end of the quote
  - o Include a citation of the source with all author, periodical, etc information at the end of your paper in the **Works Cited** or **References** page

## **Example of a Quote**

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien emphasizes the importance of loyalty when he states, "Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens" (274).

## Paraphrase - Restate the author's ideas in **your own words**.

- Paraphrasing is useful when the **wording** of the source is **less important than the meaning** of the source
  - o *Did the author express the idea so beautifully that you could never say it as well? Use a quote!*
  - o *Are there statistics, dates, or other data that will support your thesis? Paraphrase the information!*
- The paraphrase should be nearly identical in meaning to the original passage, but should not be a “cut and paste” with exact phrases from the original.
  - o *Have you simply changed a few words to synonyms? Try again. Being handy with a thesaurus is not enough to make the sentence yours.*
- Use quotation marks to identify any unique term or phraseology you have borrowed exactly from the source.
  - o *Have you included exact sequences of words from the original because they add to the context? If so, make sure to put quotation marks around those phrases.*
- Introduce your paraphrased material with a **signal phrase**
  - o A signal phrase is an effective way to identify the source (author or publication), which can add credibility to the information you are including.
- *To avoid plagiarism:*
  - o Add an **in-text citation** at the end of the paraphrased information
  - o Include a citation of the source with all author, periodical, etc information at the end of your paper in the **Works Cited** or **References** page

## Examples of Paraphrasing

- **The original passage:**  
Students frequently overuse direct quotation in taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.  
**Source:** Lester, James D. *Writing Research Papers*. 2nd ed. (1976): 46-47. Print.
- **A legitimate paraphrase** (conveys the author's ideas and key details, but uses the writer's words):  
In research papers students often quote too much, failing to keep quoted material down to a reasonable amount. Since the problem usually starts during note taking, it is essential to minimize the material recorded word for word (Lester 46-47).
- **A plagiarized version** (even though it cites the source, it follows the original almost word-for-word, only changing or cutting a few words):  
Students often use too many direct quotations when they take notes, resulting in too many of them in the final research paper. In fact, probably only about 10% of the final copy should consist of directly quoted material. So it is important to limit the amount of source material copied while taking notes (Lester 46-47).

## Examples of Using Signal Phrase to Introduce Paraphrasing

- **The original passage:**  
Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence. In other words: it is war minus the shooting.  
Source: Orwell, George, “the Sporting Spirit,” *The London Tribune*, December, 1945. 19. Print.
- **A legitimate paraphrase:**  
In his essay, “The Sporting Spirit,” George Orwell argues that sport can be just as violent as war. The idea of fair play, he says, is for serious athletes only a myth. They feel the same hateful and violent feelings as do soldiers in combat (19).
- **A plagiarized version:** (even though there is a signal phrase, the words and structure have not changed enough)  
In his essay, “The Sporting Spirit,” George Orwell claims that sport has little to do with fair play. He says that sport leads to the same feelings of hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, and sadistic pleasure that comes from witnessing violence. Sport is combat without weapons (19).