

The Writing Center @ KUMC

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Working with Sources: Quick Tips

When Paraphrasing Always...

1. **Identify** the source of information in your sentence.
2. **Reproduce the exact meaning** of another writer's ideas/facts *in your own words* and sentence structure.
3. **Rephrase** a small part of a text, such as a sentence or paragraph.
4. **Avoid** drawing conclusions or discussing implications.

When Summarizing Always...

1. **Condense** substantial amounts of material into a short paragraph or sentence, in your own words and sentence structure.
2. **Capture** the key point and spirit of a source.
3. Show a **depth of understanding** of another author's ideas.

When Quoting Always...

1. **Enclose in quotation marks** any text taken verbatim from a source.
2. Select what is **unique** or **cannot be easily paraphrased** or **requires analysis** or **represents some crucial aspect** of your topic.
3. Use the **exact words** of a source.
4. **Avoid** quoting excessively. When you do quote, introduce the source.

Now Try It Out:

1. Identify an article or chapter of a book you want to use in a paper or are reading for class.
2. Select an important passage.
3. Read the passage, underlining the words or ideas that might be difficult to paraphrase but essential to include in a paper.
4. Read the passage again! This time highlight the words or ideas that are important but easier to grasp/rephrase.
5. Take another 5-10 minutes to write out how you would explain this passage to yourself, but when you were in high school—without using the same words or sentences structures.
6. Take 5-10 minutes to write out how you would explain this passage to someone in your class who has not read it yet.
7. Ask yourself: are there any words or ideas that cannot be explained in any other way?
 - a. If YES, those would be important to quote instead of summarizing or paraphrasing.

This will help you understand a passage thoroughly before attempting to paraphrase or quote it in your paper. Remember: an honest writer always acknowledges the contributions of others and the source of his/her ideas.