

# Annotating Sources: Quote/Summary/Paraphrase



## 1. Annotating Sources

In order to write a good summary, it is helpful to have **annotated** the material first. Annotation is merely a written conversation between the reader and the writer with the reader actively responding to the text. So pretend you are talking to the writer as you read. This exercise will help you find connections between ideas within the text with ideas in other sources. It will also help you form questions that could become paper topics. Remember, this is like any other skill – you have to practice in order to improve!

- 1) Sit at a desk or someplace where you will be comfortable writing. Lying down on a sofa is not conducive to serious reading.
- 2) Read a little slower than normal. Really try to absorb what the author is writing.
- 3) As you read, look for items you find interesting, significant, or that raise questions. (Sample comments: What is the author trying to say? I don't understand this part. Look this up. )
  - a) Use stars, circles, arrows, lines, highlighting, and any other meaningful symbols to mark these things as you read. Assign different colors to elements (pink for questions, yellow for main points, orange for connecting ideas, etc.) Use arrows and lines to show related ideas in the text.
  - b) Write questions in the margins about the text; ex. What does this mean?
  - c) Note disagreements with the writer.
  - d) Put a line of text in your own words to aid understanding.
  - e) Circle any vocabulary words that are unfamiliar. Look up and note the definitions in the margin.
  - f) Make connections with the text. Ex. *This makes me think of...*
  - g) If you do not want to write in your book:
    - i) Use sticky notes in your book that can be transferred to another sheet of paper later.
    - ii) Use notebook paper with 2 columns, one for text and one for your corresponding notes.
  - h) Now go back and look at the marks you have made. Think about the connections you have found, questions you've raised. Why did you find that line interesting? What was the author trying to do?

Expect this process to take some time. Don't hurry and try to be very thorough. The results are important because they will help you with the next step – using sources in your paper.

## 2. Direct Quotes

A quote is a direct, word-for-word copy of an author's words. They can be very helpful if an author has written something in a creative, exciting manner that cannot be clearly expressed

any other way. Quotes are helpful tools in that they can increase your credibility depending on your source.

However, it is important to remember that your paper is about what you have to say. Too many quotes will take away from your ideas. Remember, sources are supposed to support your arguments. They are evidence. If you find yourself quoting every source, you may want to consider changing some to paraphrases or summaries (see following sections.)

- When quoting, copy the *exact* wording and punctuation.
- Enclose the quote in quotation marks (“ ”).
- If you need to make a small change, enclose the change in brackets ([ ]).
- Use ellipsis if you omit material (. . .).
- Always introduce or “frame” a quote. Without an introduction, the reader isn’t clear on what to make of the quote or why the person being quoted is important.
- Always include parenthetical citation. You do not want to plagiarize!

### Examples:

According to Jim Jones, author of Creative Psychology, “Character[s] of this type will not...” (12).

The last name is not included in the citation because it was already cited at the beginning of the sentence.

According to a recent study conducted by Michigan State etymologists, “The Brazilian house fly is not related to the Panamanian house fly” (Smith and Stone 423).

The citation is not included in quotation marks. The period comes after the citation.

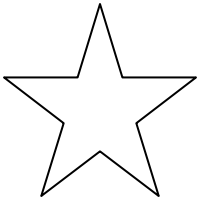
For additional information on punctuation and citation, refer to your grammar and usage handbook. Look up “quotations” in the index.

## 3. Writing a Summary

Summarizing can be a continuation of your conversation with the writer. In effect, you are repeating his/her main ideas in **your own words**. This is not a word-for-word copy of the author’s essay (see the section on paraphrasing). Remember to focus on the main ideas. First, answer two questions: 1) What is the subject of the writing? 2) What is the central message on the subject and/or the main idea?

Next, realize that when you write a summary, you will be reducing the original text by at least half. So as you summarize, you will trace the writer’s train of thought by using the subject, main idea and then the supporting details in your summary. Be careful not to interpret the writer’s ideas, just report them. (You may want to put your interpretations in the margin for future reference.) Also, do not PLAGIARIZE! Be sure to document the source you are summarizing. In short here are some tips to follow:

- 1) Read the text carefully looking for the main idea, supporting details, condensing them without losing the writer's main intent.
- 2) Write a sentence that gives the main idea using your own words.
- 3) Next, write a few sentences that give the supporting details being careful to use your own words.
- 4) Now, put all the sentences together using transition words (Writer's Handbook 84) and good verbs (Writer's Handbook 500).
- 5) Finally, cite your summary and double check for plagiarism.



- a. Remember, changing one or two words does not constitute *using your own words*. Copying the sentence structure is too close to quoting to be academically honest. If you put something in your own words, change the whole thing!
- b. Always introduce or “frame” a summary. Without an introduction, the reader isn't clear on what to make of the quote or why the person being quoted is important.
- c. Example: To summarize Bernstein's article on astrophysics,.....

#### **MORE TIPS:**

- Make a graphic organizer of the main idea and the supporting details as you read. Use a web, or any sort of organizer that is meaningful to you.
- Remember that a summary = main idea + some supporting details.
- A summary does NOT include any of your ideas.
- If you use the writer's key words or phrases, be sure to quote and document them.
- Make sure you have indicated the author's meaning of the writing in your summary.

## 4. Paraphrasing

A paraphrase “accurately states all the relevant information from a passage *in your own words and phrasing*, without any additional comments or elaboration” (Little, Brown 488).

Paraphrasing is useful when the information from a particular source is helpful, but the wording is not. Since paraphrasing requires thought and attention to detail, it shows the reader you understand the source.

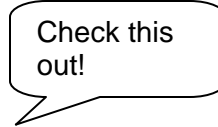
When paraphrasing **DO**:

- Use all of your own words and sentence structure.
- Restate all the main points in order.
- Introduce/frame the paraphrase.
- Cite your source!

**DO NOT:**

- Use the author's words or phrasing.
- Use the author's sentence structure.

- Include your own comments.



For additional help:

Fowler, H. Ramsey and Jane. E. Aaron. The Little, Brown Handbook. Ninth ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004.

Handbook for Writers. Custom edition for Blinn College. Boston: Pearson, 2002.