

## Summary, Paraphrasing, Quotations

Different fields use them in different proportions. In general, researchers in the humanities quote most often; social and natural scientists typically paraphrase and summarize. But you must decide each case for itself, depending on how you use the information in your argument. Here are some principles:

- 1- Summarize when details are irrelevant or a source isn't important enough to warrant more space.
- 2- Paraphrase when you can state what a source says more clearly or concisely than the source, or when your argument depends on the details of a source but not on its specific words.
- 3- Paraphrase when you need to elaborate but momentarily you are out of words
- 4- Summarize if the ideas are common knowledge but they need reiteration
- 5- Summarize if you want to introduce previous literature in the area under study
- 6- Summarize when you are out of time

### I/ Quote for these Purposes:

- The exact wording constitutes evidence that backs up your reasons.
- A passage states a view that you disagree with, and to be fair you want to state it exactly.
- The quoted words are from an authority who backs up your view.
- The quoted words are strikingly original.
- The quoted words express your key concepts so compellingly that the quotation can frame the rest of your discussion.

You must balance quotations, paraphrases, and summaries with your own fresh ideas. Do not merely repeat, or worse, download, words and ideas of others and stitch them together with a few sentences of your own.

In an advanced project such as a thesis or dissertation, readers reject a patchwork of borrowings out of hand.

Readers value research only to the degree that they trust its sources. So for every summary, paraphrase, or quotation you use, cite its bibliographic data in the appropriate citation style

### II/ The Elements of Effective Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing and summarising are normally used together in essay writing, but while summarising aims to reduce information to a suitable length, paraphrasing attempts to restate the relevant information. For example, the following sentence:

There has been much debate about the reasons for the industrial revolution happening in eighteenth century Britain, rather than in France or Germany.

**could be paraphrased:**

Why the industrial revolution occurred in Britain in the eighteenth century, instead of on the continent, has been the subject of considerable discussion.

**\* Note that an effective paraphrase usually:**

- has a different structure to the original
- has mainly different vocabulary
- retains the same meaning
- keeps some phrases from the original that are in common use e.g. ‘industrial revolution’ or ‘eighteenth century’

### III/ Techniques for Paraphrasing

**(a) Changing vocabulary by using synonyms:**

argues > claims/ eighteenth century > 1700s/ wages > labour  
costs/ economise > saving

**NB. Do not attempt to paraphrase every word, since some have no true synonym, e.g. demand, economy, energy**

**(b) Changing word class:**

explanation (n.) > explain (v.) / mechanical (adj.) > mechanise  
(v.) / profitable (adj.) > profitability (n.)

**(c) Changing word order:**

. . . the best explanation for the British location of the industrial  
revolution is found by studying demand factors.  
> A focus on demand may help explain the UK origin of the industrial revolution.

**REFERENCES:**

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*The Craft of Research, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory C. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, 1995, 2003, 2008 by The University of Chicago; and *The Chicago Manual of Style, 16<sup>th</sup> edition*, 2010 by The University of Chicago.

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