

Lesson six: *Using Information from the Sources*

It is essential to maintain the accuracy of a source's arguments and findings while properly crediting the original author. Paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting are key techniques to ensure accurate representation and avoid misinterpretation.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing means restating an author's ideas in your own words while keeping the length similar to the original. It requires understanding the author's views and arguments and expressing them in your own style.

Summarizing

Summarizing condenses a source into brief statements that capture its main idea, argument, or theme. Like paraphrasing, it requires careful thought. While a summary can never be entirely objective, it should be fair and accurately reflect the source's message without bias.

Quoting

When quoting, it's important to consider how an author expresses their ideas. Does the wording stand out as unique, impactful, or particularly effective? Quotes are useful for:

- Bringing in the voice of a notable expert.
- Supporting key points with strong, well-expressed statements.
- Using primary sources, such as literary texts or transcripts, where direct quotations are essential.

Generally, a research paper should contain no more than 10–20% quoted material. Therefore, quotes should be used selectively. Instead of quoting an entire passage, extract key phrases or sentences and integrate them smoothly into your writing. Also, always provide context—never drop a quote into a paragraph without explanation. Introduce it, explain its relevance, and analyze its meaning.

Citing Sources

To give proper credit to sources, use:

- Attribution tags: Phrases like *According to...*, *X argues that...*, or *X reported that...* for summaries and paraphrases.
- Quotation marks: To clearly indicate borrowed words.
- Citations: Academic writing requires in-text references so readers know the source of the information.