

# MLA Style: Quoting, Summarizing, and Paraphrasing

## QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, SUMMARIZING: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

### QUOTING:

using another writer's phrase within your own writing, word for word, bound by quotation marks.

### PARAPHRASING:

using your own words to rephrase a writer's detailed, specific idea, often because it would be too bulky to quote in full (or because the direct quote would contain information unconnected to the point you are making).

### SUMMARIZING:

using your own words to sum up an author's main idea, usually from a larger piece of the text—a paragraph, a chapter, or even an entire book.

## WHY DO I NEED TO QUOTE, PARAPHRASE, AND SUMMARIZE?

When you do research, you learn about a topic—more than you've ever learned before—and as a result, you develop a perspective, or a *thesis*, on that topic. A research paper gives you the chance to share what you've learned and share what you believe. Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing allow you to:

- \*Develop your idea
- \*Prove your point
- \*Add credibility to your argument
- \*Show your reader where you found your information

## ANYTHING I NEED TO AVOID?

If, when summarizing and/or paraphrasing, you use too much of an author's wording, style, or phrasing and pass it off as your own, you are plagiarizing that author's work.

Plagiarism is a serious form of cheating and misrepresentation. Don't go there!

## HOW DO I QUOTE, PARAPHRASE, AND SUMMARIZE?

To illustrate the difference between the three, look at the examples on the following page from the Charles Duhigg's book *The Power of Habit*. Notice how the same information is used differently in each example.



# Quoting, Summarizing, and Paraphrasing(Cont'd)

<u>QUOTING:</u>	<u>PARAPHRASING:</u>	<u>SUMMARIZING:</u>
<p>Charles Duhigg, in his book <i>The Power of Habit</i>, identifies the three elements that characterize every habit: one, “a cue, a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode,” two, “the routine, which can be physical or mental or emotional” and three, “a reward, which helps your brain figure out if this particular loop is worth remembering for the future” (19).</p>	<p><i>The Power of Habit</i> presents three elements that make up a habit—the cue, the routine, and the reward. The cue is the sensation that leads to the habit, the routine is the habit itself, and the reward is the result of the habit (Duhigg 19).</p>	<p>Charles Duhigg’s book <i>The Power of Habit</i> describes how habits are formed as a result of a repeated three-step process in the brain and shows how positive habits can be nurtured and how bad habits can be broken.</p>



<p>(notes)</p> <p>See how the quote is woven into the fabric of the sentence? There is a seamless grammatical transition between the writer’s words and the quoted words.</p> <p>Sometimes it is better to quote little phrases rather than big whole sentences. Only quote what you need.</p>	<p>(notes)</p> <p>Notice how, in the paraphrase, there are no quotes surrounding any of the text. That’s because the writer used all her own words, taking a specific concept from <i>The Power of Habit</i> and rephrasing it in her own way. Even so, there is still a citation, because when paraphrasing or summarizing, the writer still must credit ideas found in sources.</p>	<p>(notes)</p> <p><b>If you compare the summary to the paraphrase, you’ll notice that the summary is taking a much bigger, general concept—the subject of the book itself—and describing it in very general terms, whereas the paraphrase presents a focused rephrasing of a more specific idea.</b></p>
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## WHERE DO I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

from Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (OWL):  
[Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing](#)

from Harvard University’s Guide to Using Sources:  
[Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting](#)

