

Principle Three: When Should I Quote, Paraphrase, and Summarize?

Quoting: You should quote when you've met two conditions: one, that you're going to explain the quote and, two, that the author's original wording is impactful or imperative. For example, whenever you analyze literature or rhetoric, you must quote the specific passage you want to analyze because you must focus on and explain the author's rhetorical decisions. You do not need to quote passages that provide context for your argument: for example, the author's biographical information.

Paraphrasing: You should paraphrase when the author's wording is not important but his/her ideas are imperative to your argument. For example, when researching for a paper, you might find an article with great ideas written in a verbose style. In this instance, you would want to paraphrase the author, keeping all those excellent ideas while eliminating the extra words.

Note You paraphrase to restate ideas not words. If you find yourself just "rewording" a passage, then you're not paraphrasing; you're plagiarizing.

Summarizing: You should summarize when you want to capture the gist of something. You're not going to summarize information imperative to your argument; instead, you want to summarize contextual information, information readers must know to understand your argument. For example, if you're writing about Grandma Gertrude's lasagna, before you start quoting, you must ensure that your readers know what lasagna is.

Principle Four: What Must I Avoid?

Quoting unnecessary information: I often encounter students guilty of overquoting, students who quote merely to finish their own sentences. Since every passage you quote must directly support your argument, you must not quote information that doesn't support your argument. Instead, you could paraphrase that information and place it in the context of your argument.

☹ Example: Grandma Gertrude lived "in a small, quaint colonial house." *Remember, you're arguing that Grandma Gertrude's Lasagna is the best west of Naples; her house lacks relevance.*

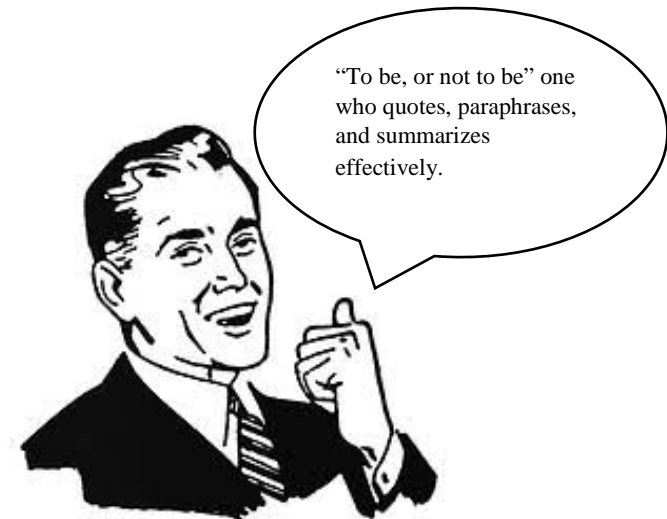
☺ Example: Grandma Gertrude always whipped up that awesome sauce in her quaint colonial home.

Quote Dropping: Often, students just drop quotes into their essay without providing context. Your reader needs to know who you're quoting and why that person is credible.

☹ Example: Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is the best for so many reasons. "No sauce can rival the texture, flavor, and consistency of her sauce." *Who said this quote? How are they credible?*

☺ Example: Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is the best for so many reasons. World-renowned chef Gordon Ramsay once said, "No sauce can rival the texture, flavor, and consistency of her sauce."

Petracca's Principles for Effective Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing



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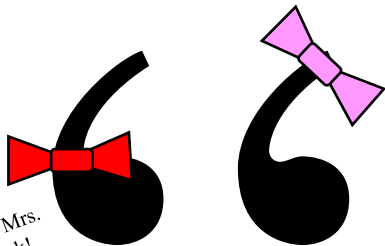
Introduction

Hey kids! You're probably reading this guide because you have a paper to write, a paper in which you must include "textual evidence." Or maybe your professor already returned that paper to you, and you didn't score as well as you expected. Well, ain't that a kick in the trousers?!

Textual evidence can be tricky business. Here in Western society, we have this thing called "intellectual property," which means that people have legal rights over the ideas they create. Since you have yet to establish yourself as an expert in your field (you will one day, I promise) you must borrow experts' ideas to support your own. Therefore, you must learn to quote, paraphrase, and summarize effectively, both to support your own ideas/arguments and to avoid plagiarism.

These principles will assist you through the nebulosity of textual evidence and will clear any misconceptions about quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

Let's get started!



Meet Mr. and Mrs.
Quotation Mark!
They're here for
moral support.

Principle One: Why Must I Quote, Paraphrase, and Summarize?

You must quote, paraphrase, and summarize to support your argument, to provide evidence for a main point, and/or to provide context for an argument.

Quoting: You must always quote for a purpose, usually to support your argument. For example, let's say you're writing an essay arguing that your Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is the best lasagna west of Naples. Now, you can't just make that claim and expect me to believe you, because—let me tell you—Grandma Petracca's lasagna will knock those fuzzy socks right off your feet—so you must quote, using **reliable sources** to prove your point. See **Principle Two** for a sample quote.

Paraphrasing: Writers often confuse paraphrasing with summarizing, but the two have different purposes. Paraphrasing shares a similar purpose to quoting; you paraphrase to support your argument—but when you paraphrase, you do not use the author's words verbatim. See **Principle Two** for a sample paraphrase.

Summarizing: Unlike paraphrasing, you summarize to capture the main ideas in a large body of text. Though summaries might look like paraphrases at first, you would not summarize to support your argument, and, as you continue reading, you will see that the two are vastly different.

Note When quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing, you must always include a parenthetical citation with corresponding bibliographical citation. Please see the CCSU Writing Center's citation guides for more citation information.

Principle Two: How do I Quote, Paraphrase, and Summarize?

Quoting: Quoting is simple, I swear. To quote, you must take an author's exact words and place them inside quotation marks. For example, let's say you're reading a passage from an article written on your Grandma Gertrude's lasagna. The passage reads as follows:

Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is absolutely sublime. No sauce can rival the texture, flavor, and consistency of her sauce. No chef can match her shrewd balance of sauce, noodles, and cheese. No one even knows her recipe.

Here's how you would quote the first sentence: **"Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is absolutely sublime."** Easy-peasy. Remember, though, in American English, always place periods and commas inside the quotes and all other punctuation outside the quotes—unless that punctuation is part of the passages you're quoting.

Paraphrasing: You paraphrase by briefly restating an author's ideas. You can think of paraphrasing as shortening paragraphs into sentences. Here's a sample paraphrase of the aforementioned passage: **The article notes that Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is well-balanced and has excellent sauce, leaving her lasagna unrivaled.** Notice how you do not need to put paraphrases in quotation marks.

Summarizing: Do not confuse summarizing with paraphrasing; you summarize to capture the main ideas in a large body of text. You can think of summarizing as transforming chapters into sentences or an article into sentences. Here's a sample summary for the entire article on Grandma Gertrude's lasagna: **The article explains how Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is superior to all other lasagnas. Due to a combination of skill, dedication, and secret ingredients, Grandma Gertrude's lasagna is the ideal lasagna.** Notice how the summary comprises main ideas with few specific details.