Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

You *can* borrow from the works of other writers as you research. Good writers use three strategies—summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting—to blend source materials in with their own, while making sure their own voice is heard.

Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) of one or several writers into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summarized ideas are not necessarily presented in the same order as in the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

Summarize when:

- You want to establish background or offer an overview of a topic
- You want to describe common knowledge (from several sources) about a topic
- You want to determine the main ideas of a single source

Paraphrasing means rephrasing the words of an author, putting his/her thoughts in your own words. A paraphrase can be viewed as a "translation" of the original source. When you paraphrase, you rework the source's ideas, words, phrases, and sentence structures with your own. Paraphrased text is often, but not always, slightly shorter than the original work. Like quotations, paraphrased material must be followed with in-text documentation and cited on the Works Cited page.

Paraphrase when:

- You plan to use information on your note cards and wish to avoid plagiarizing
- You want to avoid overusing quotations
- You want to use your own voice to present information

Quotations are the exact words of an author, copied directly from the source word for word. Quotations must be cited!

Use quotations when:

- You want to add the power of an author's words to support your argument
- You want to disagree with an author's argument
- You want to highlight particularly eloquent or powerful phrases or passages
- You are comparing and contrasting specific points of view
- You want to note the important research that precedes your own

---