



## Using Your Sources

**Good Evidence** shows the reader the real phenomena your paper examines and should always be interpreted in terms of your thesis. You can show your evidence by **paraphrasing**, **summarizing** or **quoting**. By using evidence well, you will demonstrate your mastery of your researched sources and maintain a strong and consistent writing voice, which will help you avoid **plagiarism** or misrepresentation.

### What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is when you use another person's words, ideas, notions, or facts without properly citing that person as the originator. Whether it is intentional or unintentional, you are plagiarizing if you:

- 1) use another person's words without putting them in quotation marks,
- 2) use another person's ideas without citing them as a source,
- 3) borrow a fact from your source without citing it, or
- 4) reprint any tables, illustrations, or charts without documenting the source.

You do not need to cite when you:

- 1) use common knowledge (such as the name of the president or the date of WWI),
- 2) find the information undocumented in more than four sources,
- 3) or write your own ideas or experiences.

## Paraphrasing and Summarizing:

When you use evidence or ideas from a source but do not directly quote the original you are paraphrasing. Paraphrasing and summarizing are important because they force you to put information and ideas into your own words. By paraphrasing and summarizing, you will demonstrate a deeper understanding of the material because the process requires you to synthesize the information in the original source. When using paraphrase or summary, you must also introduce and interpret the information.

### When to paraphrase or summarize instead of quote:

- A quote would be too long and distract from your flow.
- You say it better than the author for your own purposes.
- The author's words are not memorable but the information is good.
- You want to take evidence from several pages and condense it into a few sentences.
- You are using second source material.

### Strategies for Paraphrasing:

- 1) Imagine you are explaining the idea to a friend.
- 2) Avoid using the author's sentence structure, wording, or phrases.
- 3) Resist the desire to look at the original source when paraphrasing.
- 4) If you do use any of the original source's language, put it in quotation marks.



### Example

#### *Original Source*

When the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Boston Tea Party was celebrated in Boston, an enormous crowd turned out, not for the official celebration, but for the “People’s Bi-Centennial” countercelebration, where packages marked “Gulf Oil” and “Exxon” were dumped into the Boston Harbor, to symbolize opposition to corporate power in America.

--Howard Zinn, *People’s History*, page 550

#### *Paraphrase*

A large crowd threw boxes labeled “Gulf Oil” and “Exxon” into Boston Harbor during the 1976 bicentennial celebration of the Boston Tea Party. This unofficial event represented public discontent with the power of corporations in America (Zinn 550).

### Using Quotes:

#### Use direct quotations when:

- a source is particularly clear or has a style of language that the author cannot paraphrase.
- using a primary source or first hand account.
- using facts.
- using statistics.
- quoting from interviews.

**Quote Sandwich:** There are three steps to fitting a quote into your text successfully: introduce it, state it, and interpret it. If the quote is not sandwiched between an introduction and interpretation your reader will have a hard time understanding how it relates to the content of your essay.

- 1) **Introduction:** Introducing your quote provides a smooth transition between your own words and those of your source. When introducing your quote, give the reader an idea of where it comes from and, when appropriate, an idea of how it relates to ideas already present in your essay. For example:

Howard Zinn, in *A People’s History of the United States*, explains that during the 1700s...

In contrast, Russell Kirk argues... claims...admits...agrees...denies...

Doris Kearns Goodwin states... illustrates...implies...insists...writes...thinks...

- 2) **Stating the Quote:** When quoting, use only as much of your source’s words as absolutely necessary. You should omit part of the quote if it is not important for making your point, but only when removing that section will not change the author’s original meaning. Replace the removed section with an ellipsis (...) to make your reader aware of the omission. For example:

In *The Jungle*, a socialist speaker tells his audience that “There are a million people ...who share the curse of the wage slave” (Sinclair 255).

- 3) **Interpretation:** In your essay, interpretations should follow all direct quotes. Interpretation shows the reader why you, the author, included the quote and what the quote’s role is in the overall structure of your argument. Without your interpretation, the relationship between the quote and your original ideas will be unclear to the reader because the reader may not understand the relevance of the quote. Whether you are paraphrasing or quoting, it is vital that you interpret the information.