

THE WHEN, WHICH, WHY AND HOW OF CITING SOURCES

When

Quotations

Quotations are the most straight-forward type of citations; they are short word-for-word segments of a text. If you are taking information verbatim from a source, then you need to cite it in quotation marks.

Example: “Humans’ closest relative was Neanderthal man, now extinct for about 28,000 years” (Russell 2010). *Cited in CSE format.*

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is when you use someone else’s ideas but put it into your own words. It is still important to cite these kinds of sources in order to let the reader know that these ideas are not entirely yours. Paraphrasing does not require quotation marks; instead, the citation goes at the end of the thought.

Example: Although Greeks were choosy about their wine, they often bought it from places outside of Greece. Citizens of the higher class imported wine from many of Greece’s local trading partners—including Palestine, Egypt and southern Italy. One story tells that the famous wrestler, Milo of Croton, consumed ten liters of foreign wine daily (Toussaint-Samat 263). *Cited in MLA format.*

Summary

Summarizing is much like paraphrasing, in that you take someone else’s ideas and put them into your own words. However, in summaries you only write about the key points of the text. You condense the information of the original source and give a broad overview of the material.

Example: Michael Perry’s essay “Scarlet Ribbons” is about one man’s internal struggle in choosing between a technical or a liberal arts education. Even though he had a deep appreciation for technical education, he eventually leaves his chosen field of nursing to become a writer (259-262). *Cited in MLA format.*

Data and Facts That are Not Common Knowledge

You must cite all data and figures that you use. Any percentages, statistics, or scientific results obtained from sources must be followed by citations. Facts also need to be cited, but only if they are not common knowledge. The phrase “common knowledge” means any information that your audience is likely to know already, or information that is commonly available in a wide variety of sources. But when in doubt, cite it.

Rule of Thumb – Whenever You are Not Sure

If you are unsure about whether or not to cite a source, cite it anyway!

Which

How do you determine when to use quotations, paraphrasing, or summaries?

When to Use Quotes

- Sparingly for analytical emphasis.
- For authority, to show why you agree or disagree with a source about your topic.
- When the original author “said it best.” If the quote is unique and effective, sometimes paraphrasing or summarizing may change the impact of the source.
- Whenever you want to closely analyze the words chosen by the author.

When to use Paraphrasing

- When the specific wording of the source is arbitrary in comparison to the meaning.
- To simplify and clarify the material, when a quote would be too lengthy or confusing.
- To introduce and analyze a source but maintain the authoritative style of your paper.

When to use Summaries

- To introduce a large source, like a book, without detailed explanation.
- To condense a lengthy topic into just a few sentences.
- To simplify and give an overview of the source, and omit information unrelated to your topic.

Why

Here are a few good reasons always to cite your sources:

- Citations reflect on the time and work that you put into your paper, and show the reader that you have researched your topic well, as well as demonstrate your legitimacy and integrity as an author in that field of study.
- They give interested readers the opportunity to research more about your topic of study.
- Citations enhance the legitimacy of your own argument and show that there are other published authors who share the same opinions and arguments as you.
- Most importantly, by giving credit to your sources, you avoid plagiarism, which is illegal.

How

Citations come in many shapes and forms. There are many different formats, styles, and reference structures available, and which one you use will depend on the type of writing that you are doing.

There are three main reference formats used in academic writing:

- **In-text** – the source’s author is included in the body of the text as a reference to “Works Cited” page placed at the end of the paper

- **End notes** – the citation is marked with a number in the paper and the source is listed at the end of the paper
- **Foot notes** – the citation is marked with a number, and sources are listed at the bottom of each page

This chart shows the common citation format for each academic discipline. However, check with your professor, because each course has different expectations.

Discipline	Major/Classes	Citation Style
Arts	Art and Art History, Music, Theater, Dance	MLA (Modern Language Association), Chicago
Sciences	Biology	CSE (Council of Science Editors)
	Biochemistry and Molecular Biology	ACS (American Chemical Society)
	Chemistry	ACS
	Environmental Studies	CSE, ACS, APA (American Psychological Association), ASA (American Sociological Association)
	Mathematics and Computer Science	AMS (American Mathematical Society), Chicago
	Neuroscience	CSE, APA
	Physics	AIP (American Institute of Physics)
Humanities	American Studies, Classics, East Asian Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies	MLA, Chicago
	English, Modern Languages	MLA
	History	Chicago
Social Sciences	Anthropology and Sociology	AAA (American Anthropological Association), ASA
	Business and Economics	APA, Chicago, Harvard
	Education	APA
	Media and Communication Studies	MLA, APA
	Politics and International Relations	APSA (American Political Science Association), APA, Chicago
	Psychology	APA

Works Cited

- Ho, Clement. "Citation Style Guide." *American.edu*. American University, 2013. Web. 21 Nov. 2013.
- Leibensperger, Summer. "Decide When to Quote, Paraphrase & Summarize." *University of Houston-Victoria*. University of Houston-Victoria, 2003. Web. 21 Nov. 2013.