

How to use quotations, paraphrases, and summaries

Read the entire text, noting the key points and main ideas.

Summarize in your own words what the single main idea of the essay is.

Paraphrase important supporting points that come up in the essay.

Consider any words, phrases, or brief passages that you believe should be quoted directly.

There are several ways to integrate quotations into your text. Often, a short quotation works well when integrated into a sentence. Longer quotations can stand alone. **Remember that quoting should be done only sparingly**; be sure that you have a good reason to include a direct quotation when you decide to do so.

Introducing a quotation smoothly:

One of your jobs as a writer is to guide your reader through your text. Don't simply drop quotations into your paper and leave it to the reader to make connections.

Integrating a quotation into your text usually involves two elements:

A signal that a quotation is coming--generally the author's name and/or a reference to the work

An assertion that indicates the relationship of the quotation to your text

Often both the signal and the assertion appear in a single introductory statement, as in the example below. Notice how a transitional phrase also serves to connect the quotation smoothly to the introductory statement.

Ross (1993), in her study of poor and working-class mothers in London from 1870-1918 [signal], makes it clear that economic status to a large extent determined the meaning of motherhood [assertion]. Among this population [connection], "The mother was to work for and organize household subsistence" (p. 9).

The signal can also come after the assertion, again with a connecting word or phrase:

Illness was rarely a routine matter in the nineteenth century [assertion]. As [connection] Ross observes [signal], "Maternal thinking about children's health revolved around the possibility of a child's maiming or death" (p. 166).

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