

Citing Your Research

(MLA Format)

In academic writing you will support your ideas with quotes, data, statistics, and images created by others. To avoid plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty, you will give credit to the original author or creator by citing the source of your information. You will cite your sources in the text and at the end of your paper on a Works Cited page.

You may use information from sources in three ways: by **quoting**, by **summarizing**, and by **paraphrasing**. If you use the words exactly as they appear in the source, you are **quoting**. If you state the main ideas from a source in your own words, you are **summarizing**. Finally, if you restate material from a source in your own words, using your own sentence structure, you are **paraphrasing**. In academic writing you should paraphrase and summarize as much as possible.

Quoting Source Information: You should use a direct quote in the following situations.

- When you want to lend authority to your writing.
- When the original source has stated the point so well that it should not be restated.
- When you are dealing with a complex issue and the ideas might be misconstrued in a paraphrase.

To indicate a direct quote, you should put quotation marks (e.g. “quote”) around the words you have taken from the source.

Work quotations smoothly into your sentences or introduce them with a signal phrase. Do not place them in your writing as separate sentences.

Use a parenthetical citation (last name, page number) with the quote, in addition to the quotation marks to indicate the source.

Adams is said to have had “the hands of a man accustomed to pruning his own trees, cutting his own hay, and splitting his own firewood” (McCullough 18).

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If you are quoting an author who is speaking about herself, you do not need to restate her name in the parentheses.

“Language is the tool of my trade,” admits Amy Tan in her essay about standard English (549).

Changing a Quote: In order to make a quote fit grammatically into a sentence or to clarify the quoted information, you must indicate to the reader that you have changed the quoted information from the original.

If you omit parts of a quote, use an ellipsis (...) in the place where you left out part of the quote. (Create the ellipsis by typing three periods in a row, with no spaces between them.

In her essay, Antonia Peacocke argues that Family Guy provides an astute satire of American society, though she concedes that it does sometimes “seem to cross...the line of indecency” (266).

Adding to a Quote: If you add a word or two to a quote to clarify something, use square brackets [] to enclose the information you added.

As Barbosa notes, Chico Buarque’s lyrics include “many a metaphor of *saudades* [yearning] so characteristic of fado music” (207).

Summarizing and Paraphrasing: You must also use a parenthetical citation at the end of the paraphrase or summary to indicate the source of the ideas.

Machiavelli indicates that a prince should focus his mind entirely on war and how to wage war, because that is all that is important to a person in command of others (348).

Note: Students are considered guilty of plagiarism if they knowingly submit material written by someone else. This can include sentences, paragraphs, or entire papers copied from individuals or Internet sites.

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