

Quote/Summarize/Paraphrase

A writer's purpose, target audience, and other factors will determine which method of integrating a source will be most effective. Regardless of which method a writer chooses, the source being integrated must be cited or clearly attributed to the original author(s). These examples use MLA 8th Edition formatting.

Quoting directly is most effective when the source author's original phrasing optimally suits the writer's purposes or when the writer wishes to use the authority of the author; the writer simply borrows the wording verbatim. (Note: Quoting is more commonly used in the humanities, such as when the words of an author are themselves the evidence for a statement.)

Summarizing a source works well when the writer must reiterate the **key points** of—or simply demonstrate that he or she has read—a lengthy source. A summary should be written in fewer words than the original text.

Paraphrasing is useful when a deeper analysis of a source is necessary, when the writer wants to explore the meaning or significance of a dense passage more fully. A paraphrase will often be written in about the same or greater number of words than the original text. (Note: Summarizing and paraphrasing, while used in all disciplines, are more often expected when writing for the physical, natural, and social sciences.)

EXAMPLES of One Selection Treated 3 ways

Quote

Describing the literary experience, Renee Descartes wrote, "Reading good books is like engaging in conversation with the most cultivated minds of the past century who had composed them, or rather, taking part in a well-conducted dialogue in which such minds reveal to us only the best of their thoughts" (269).

Summary

Reading is like having discussions with the brightest minds of the last hundred years in which the authors share only their best ideas (Descartes 269).

Paraphrase

When reading important works of literature, it is as if the reader were intellectually engaged with the most brilliant and influential writers of their respective generations—interacting with geniuses despite the constraints of space and time—but these exchanges are strictly measured discourses, focusing only on the most poignant and impactful concepts those authors ever conceived (Descartes 269).