

Quoting and Paraphrasing

Examples in MLA Citation Style

There are two ways to incorporate evidence and outside support into your writing: quoting and paraphrasing. Which should you use, and when? What's the correct format?

Quoting

Use quotation

- when taking the exact words from a source
- when it is important to show the original wording (i.e, the original phrasing is unique, reveals something about the writer, specifically helps your own point, or cannot be improved upon)

In general, quotations should be used sparingly, and they should be contextualized; that is, you should explain the meaning and importance of the quotation so it's clear why you're including it in your essay.

Be careful: Don't quote large sections of text unless absolutely necessary. Too much quotation can make your writing look like the pasted-together ideas of other people.

Lead into Quotations

It's a good idea to lead into (or out of) quotations, explaining the source as you do. This helps the reader understand where the quotation is from, and how it fits into your own point.

- *Ex.* (in MLA style): According to Arthur Perry, author of *Lost Empires*, Charlemagne's accomplishments "resounded culturally as much as they did militaristically" (197).

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the expression of information or ideas from an outside source in your own words.

Use paraphrase

- when the general ideas or concepts are more important than the original wording of the source
- to establish and maintain your own voice in discussing outside sources, information, and evidence
- *Ex.* In her 2000 book, Sommers concludes that contrary to popular thought, boys often face more educational problems in schools than girls (22).

Points to remember:

- Just like quotation, you must cite your source when you paraphrase.
- If you're using the exact words from a source—or close to the exact words—you are quoting, not paraphrasing.

Correct Citation Style

Depending upon whether you are using MLA, APA, or some other documentation style, how you cite your sources will be different. The UWC has hard copy handouts, style guides, and website assistance for all major styles. If you're not sure of the documentation style you should be using, consult your professor.