

Terms to Know for the Research Paper

When you write a research paper, you collect information from several sources, analyze and organize this information, and present it to your readers in a clear and interesting way.

- source – any outside information (book, periodical, website, etc) that will be used for support in your paper
- book – a hard copy of a book...not to be confused with an online book or an online summary of a book
- periodical – newspaper, magazine, or journal; can be found in the library through Athena Search or online through the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL); all periodical sources must be legitimate and appropriate for your topic
- reference – dictionary, encyclopedia, etc.
- website – the most reliable (and only acceptable) websites are found in the AVL; should end with .org and .gov
- bibliography card – mode of organization; for each source write all bibliographical information as it will appear on the works cited page
- summarize – write a brief summary of the information, highlighting the most important parts
- paraphrase – writing the information in your own words
- direct quote – quote a source word for word; use quotation marks
- works cited page – an alphabetical listing of all sources used in your paper; the last page of the paper; critical to avoiding plagiarism
- citing a source – giving credit to the outside source (for a summary, paraphrase, or direct quote) which you are using as support in your paper
 - site = noun; location; ex.: construction site; website
 - cite = verb; to document
- parenthetical documentation – used to cite sources; at the end of the sentence containing outside information, write the author's name and page number in parentheses; pay careful attention to specific rules for sources with no author and/or page numbers
- plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas/statements/work as your own

Modern Language Association (MLA) Documentation General Guidelines

Titles – Underlining and Quotation Marks

- When you type, *italicize* the titles of works published independently, including books, plays, pamphlets, periodicals, films, and operas. (Underlining is designated for handwritten documents.) Use quotation marks for the titles of works published within larger works, such as the name of an article in a newspaper/magazine/journal or the title of a short story in an anthology.

Names

- When using a person's name for the first time in your writing, state it fully and accurately. For subsequent use of the name, give the person's last name only.
- In general, do not use formal titles in referring to men or women, living or dead. (Bradbury, not Mr. Bradbury; Einstein, not Professor Einstein)

Parenthetical Citations/Documentation

- Everything that you borrow—direct quotes, examples, facts, ideas—must be documented in your paper (parenthetical documentation). The idea behind parenthetical citation is to provide just enough information in the text of the paper so that the reader can locate the source in your Works Cited section.
- Parenthetical documentation for sources in print:
 - Single author:
 - Quite simply, Aurora is jealous of her sister and the attention that Annie receives from her parents (Owen 78).
 - According to David Owen, professor of literature at Harvard University, Aurora is jealous of her sister and the attention that Annie receives from her parents (78).
- Parenthetical documentation for internet sources:
 - If the author's name is given:
 - Eliza Darcy of *Time Magazine on the Web* reports that “over fifty million people are affected by rancid, packaged meat each year” (Darcy).
 - If there is more than one author:
 - Chopin's story is a warning against the speed at which society moves and delivers information (Smith and Jones).
 - If there are three or more authors, use only the first author's name.
 - If the author's name is not given:
 - Recent reports prove that “over fifty million people are affected by rancid, packaged meat each year” (“Everyday Dangers”).
- *Notice that no page numbers are used for online sources.*
- What to do if...
 - You have two articles by the same author:
 - Provide the author's last name as well as an identifying portion of the article title. For an author who wrote one article titled, “Redefining Our Perception of the Modern Age,” and an article titled, “Hemingway: the Man, the Myth, the Legend,” you would write (Baron, “Redefining” 97).

Punctuation for Direct Quotes

- An embedded quote, one that flows as part of the sentence (sometimes includes words such as *that* or *which*) does not have a comma precede the quote. Ex:
 - A recent study at the University of Georgia proves that “ninety percent of the visual signs of aging are a result of exposure to the sun” (Davenport 67).

- When the narrator states that Montresor's "heart grew sick," Poe allows the reader to assume the potential for guilt ("Understanding the Writings of Poe").
 - Notice that a comma follows the quote, inside the quotation marks, because the sentence continues.
- A quote that is introduced by a transitional verb is preceded by a comma. Ex:
 - As Davenport explains, "ninety percent of the visual signs of aging are a result of exposure to the sun" (67).
- When quoting lines of poetry, separate the lines with a (/) and then use the page number on which the poem is found:
 - Frost presents the debate in the first two lines of the poem with, "Some say the world will end in fire, / Some say in ice" (220). Notice that punctuation and capitalization or congruent with the poem.
- Notice that the period to conclude the sentence is *always* on the outside of the parentheses.

The Works Cited Page

- Should be alphabetized by authors' last names
 - If there is no author, alphabetize by title of the piece—disregarding *a*, *an*, and *the*.
- Should appear at the end of your paper
- Each source that you cite in the paper must appear in your Works Cited list; likewise, each entry in the Works Cited list must be cited in your text.
- Author's names are inverted (last name first)
 - If a work has more than one author, invert only the first author's name, follow it with a comma then continue listing the rest of the authors.
 - If you have cited more than one work by a particular author, order them alphabetically by title.
 - When an author appears both as the sole author of a text and as the first author of a group, list sole-author entries first.
- The first line of each entry in your list should be flush left. Subsequent lines should be indented 5 spaces to the right (tab once)
- All sources should be double-spaced, example

General MLA Formatting

- Your essay should be typed, double-spaced on standard-sized paper (8 ½ x 11 inches) with 1 inch margins on all sides. No title page is necessary—you should use the MLA heading in the top left hand corner of the first page. Then center your title on the next line and begin your essay immediately below the title.
- Your Works Cited page should begin on a separate page, and it should appear with the heading Works Cited centered at the top of the page. No MLA heading on the Works Cited page. Works Cited page should include the name and page number heading in the top right corner.
- Every page (not including the first) should have a heading in the top right corner, a half-inch from the top of the page, which includes your last name and the page number.

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Now that you have gathered a variety of sources that validate the fact that a modern, public figure can be compared to Hester Prynne, it is time to think about how you will incorporate that information into your Compare and Contrast Essay. *Everything* that you have learned about Hester Prynne and your public figure that you did not know before you began this process must be cited in your essay. That means that you give credit to the person that provided you with that information through parenthetical documentation.

Does that mean that I have to cite every sentence in my essay?

No, you do not have to cite the information that is common knowledge; for example, we know before reading that Hester committed adultery, and we know that Britney Spears is a pop star. Remember that this is an analytical compare and contrast essay. That means that you are going to present information about Hester (some will have to be cited) and information about your public figure (some will have to be cited). You will then “blend” this information by demonstrating what they have in common or what they do not have in common. That will come from your very smart brain, and you would never cite yourself.

How do I go about using my sources? How do I know when to summarize, when to paraphrase, and when to quote?

Summarize

You summarize when you have a lengthy article or chapter from a book that provides valuable information. You know that you can take that information and state it with one or two concise sentences. You take something *long* and make it *short*. A summary should not be too broad; you are still providing details—you’re just not going into *all* the detail that the original author detail did. Example:

Hester was raised by honorable and pious parents; she was expected to behave in a way that was moral, decent, and honest (Hawthorne 73).

Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is putting another author’s words into your own words. You must *reword* the original text completely. You cannot simply change a couple of words and call it paraphrasing. We actually call that “plagiaphrasing,” or retaining too much of the original wording.

So when do I choose to paraphrase instead of summarize?

You paraphrase when you have a specific bit of information to incorporate into your text. The problem with the original text is that maybe it doesn’t flow well with your own sentences—so you reword it so that it fits better. Example:

[Original text]: But since his release from prison last August, **Downey** seemed to be turning his life around. He was in the middle of a ratings-boosting guest run as Calista Flockhart's romantic interest on *Ally McBeal*. ... He had proclaimed in one interview after another that he was ready to put drugs behind him.

[My paraphrase]: Downey showed signs of improvement after his 1999 stint in jail on drug charges. He experienced success on the popular television series *Ally McBeal* and was motivated to stay clean (Lemonick).

Quote

Quoting is using another author's words verbatim in your text. Sometimes this is necessary because there is no better way to state the fact than the way it was originally written. When you quote you must follow some very important steps. Every quote must be *set up* with introductory statements and *backed up* with an analysis. We'll follow the XYZ approach:

X – The X describes the context that precedes the actual evidence. It's the point you are trying to prove with your evidence. This information tells the reader *who* said the quote and in *what* context. Think of the X as preparing the reader for the quote.

Y – The Y is the precise quote, which should be lead into with an introductory phrase, or a lead-in. Make sure that the Y (the quote) is directly related to the X and Z. Here are some rules to follow:

1. You must begin with an introductory phrase. For example, you would write...
 - a. According to Michael Levine, a former agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency, "quote goes here."
2. If there are parts of the quotation that are not useful or relevant for you, do not include them. You must, however, account for them by using an ellipsis [. . .].
 - a. Do not use ellipses before or after a quote—only in the middle.
 - b. You must put a space between each period.
3. If you need to change anything (verb tense, pronoun/antecedent, etc.), put it in brackets. They look like this: []. Read the sentence aloud to make sure it makes sense with your X and Z.
4. The citation, or parenthetical documentation, falls at the end of the *entire sentence*.

Examples:

- a. According to Michael Levine, a former agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency, we should "call off the hounds" (Bandow).
 - b. We should "call off the hounds," according to Michael Levine, a former agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency (Bandow).
5. Overusing the verbs *tells*, *says*, or *states* is monotonous. Here are some other verbs you might like:
- a. Acknowledges, adds, admits, affirms, agrees, argues, asserts, believes, claims, comments, compares, confirms, contends, declares, demonstrates, denies, disputes, emphasizes, endorses, grants, illustrates, implies, notes, observes, points out, reasons, refutes, rejects, reports, responds, states, suggests, thinks, underlines, writes

Z – The Z is the analysis of the quote. This requires you to put the X and the Y together. The analysis comes out of your very smart brain and does not need to be cited. The Z elaborates on the quote and provides an analysis that will help the reader better understand your point. If you're concerned that you have not written a good Z, ask yourself these questions:

Does the Z relate to the X? the Y?

Does the Z point back to my topic sentence and help prove my point?

Does the Z relate to my overall thesis statement at all?