

WHEN TO QUOTE, PARAPHRASE, OR SUMMARIZE

You can present information from a source in the source's words or in your own. Which you choose depends on how you plan to use the information in your argument, but also on the kind of paper you are writing, since different fields use quotation, paraphrase, and summary in different proportions.

Summarize when details are irrelevant or a source isn't important enough to warrant the space.

Paraphrase when you can state what a source says more clearly or concisely than the source does, or when your argument depends on the details in a source but not on its specific words.

Quote for these purposes:

1. The quoted words themselves are your evidence, and you need to deal with them exactly as they appeared in the original.
2. The quoted words are strikingly original, well expressed, odd, or otherwise too useful to lose in paraphrase.
3. The passage states a view that you disagree with, and to be fair you want to state it exactly.
4. The passage is from an authority who backs up your view.
5. The passage expresses your key concepts so clearly that the quotation can frame the rest of your discussion.