

QUOTATION

OR

PARAPHRASE?

A BRIEF HANDOUT TO HELP YOU DECIDE:
WOULD IT BE MORE EFFECTIVE TO PARAPHRASE
THE INFORMATION OR DIRECTLY QUOTE THE
SOURCE?



The emphasis is on the source's language.
(How it was said...)

- You want to show how the source's word choice was interesting, confusing, or ambiguous.
- You want to hold the source accountable to past statements.
- You need to use technical (discipline or field specific) language to support your argument.

The source's authority can lend support to your argument

- You need an expert opinion to support your argument.

Tips for introducing your quotations

Use verbs that indicate tone. For example, argues, explains, questions or agrees.

Introduce the source with their credentials. Why should we listen to *them*?

The emphasis is on the source's content.
(What was said...)

- You want the numbers! All you want are the statistics.
- All you need is a summary.
- The original quotation is too jargon-heavy and you need to translate it for your audience.

You gain authority by showing you understand the information

- Taking the information and putting it into your own words shows how well you understand the information and how to present it.

Tips for a quality paraphrase

Try restating the idea in your own voice without looking at the original sentence(s).

Then, compare and revise.

Quotation Punctuation

Basics

- Capitalize the first letter in the quote if it starts a complete sentence.
- Do not capitalize the first letter if the quote is a fragment.
- If the quote is interrupted mid quote, do not capitalize the second half.
- Punctuation goes at the end of a sentence. If the citation ends the sentence, then the period goes after the citation.

Example

The second chapter in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Steering the Craft* is titled "Punctuation." She encourages writers to approach punctuation as **"a whole kit of the most essential, beautiful, elegant tools a writer has to work with" (31)**. She does not, however, equate a love of punctuation to a **"moralistic stance on grammar."** Instead, the focus should be on avoiding misuse. She argues, **"Even with the best intentions, language misused, language used stupidly, careless, brutally, language used wrongly, breeds lies, half-truths, confusion" (32)**.

Alterations or As Is

Use an ellipsis to "cut out" the parts you don't need.

Example: In *The Lathe of Heaven*, Ursula K. Le Guin's description of the jellyfish in the ocean current uses verbs to generate motion: "Current-borne, wave-flung, tugged hugely by the whole might of the ocean... **Borne, flung, tugged** from anywhere to anywhere... **Hanging, swaying, pulsing...**" (7).

Use [brackets] when you add context or alter the verb tense.

For clarity, replace vague pronouns with the reference. In the following example, "it" is replaced by its **referent**: "... **[the jelly fish]** has for its defense the violence and power of the whole ocean" (Le Guin 7).

Use (*sic*) if the original text has a grammatical error. Place [*sic*] (*italics included*) after the error to signal the text is "as is."

"The cartoonist cast back to another strip he had drawn in 1972 as a contribution to a compendium called Funny **Aminals (*sic*)**."

— David H. VanBiema, *People*, 27 Oct. 1986

Comma or Colon

When introducing a quote, use a comma after a fragment and a colon after an independent clause.

The tutor said, "You need a comma there."

This will be my final example: "I am done."

