

Once you know how to research a topic, it's usually easy to find good, credible information and ideas written by other people. The hard part comes when you try to use this material in your own work without plagiarizing.

Let's have a look at 3 methods that you can use to incorporate other writers' words into your papers, essays and reports: Summary, Paraphrase & Direct Quotation.

And don't forget that you always need to reference or cite other writers' words. At Durham College, you will cite using either MLA or APA citation. Ask your professor if you're not sure which you should use.

You might wonder... when is the best circumstance to use a summary, a paraphrase or a direct quotation?

You write a **summary** when you want to highlight the main ideas from a longer piece of writing and show how those ideas relate to your topic. With a summary, you cite your source, but you do not use quotation marks.

You **paraphrase** when you would like to use a block of information which is too long for a direct quotation, and you want to change the wording (but not the meaning!) to fit with the rest of your assignment. With a paraphrase, you cite your source, but you do not use quotation marks.

You use a **direct quotation** when the original writing is effective, memorable, or clearly demonstrates the expertise of its author. When you use a direct quotation, you cite your source and you also use quotation marks.

Let's go back and look at each of these three ways to use other authors' words in your writing.

What is a summary?

When I ask you what a movie is about, I don't want to know everything about it from beginning to end. I want to get a good idea of what the story is about and any details that really matter to the story.

Summarizing an article for your research assignment is very similar. When you summarize, you show that you understand the material and can integrate it into your own writing. You:

- take a **BIG** passage of writing and make it **SMALL**.
- put the main idea(s) of a writer into your own words, including only the main point(s)
- indicate where the summarized idea came from, including an in-text citation beside your summary **AND** a complete listing on the References (APA) or Works Cited (MLA) *page*

What is a paraphrase?

Sometimes you find a paragraph in a source and you would like to include ALL or some of it in your paper. However, it might be too long to include as a direct quotation, or you want to change the wording to better fit with the rest of your assignment.

This is when you decide to paraphrase. You take information from an original source, but you:

- write it in your own words
- change the sentence structure and the order of the sentences
- keep the main idea, details and meaning the same
- keep it approximately the same length
- indicate where the paraphrased idea came from, including an in-text citation beside your paraphrase AND a complete listing on the References (APA) or Works Cited (MLA) *page*

What is a direct quotation?

Most students are familiar with including direct quotations from researched materials. Sometimes an author expresses an idea or even some relevant information in such a memorable or effective way that it makes sense to let the original source speak for itself.

This is when you decide to integrate a direct quotation into your paper or essay. You clearly state where the quotation is from, usually before you start the quotation. Then you write the author's exact words in quotation marks. In a direct quotation, you:

- only put the author's words within the quotation marks
- never change the wording
- keep enough of the quotation that the original context is clear
- never combine quotations from two different parts of the source into one quotation
- indicate where the quotation came from, including an in-text citation beside your quotation AND a complete listing on the References (APA) or Works Cited (MLA) *page*

How do you avoid plagiarizing?

Now that we've covered summarizing, paraphrasing and direct quotations – let's look at how you can avoid plagiarizing.

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's words or ideas without indicating where the information came from. If you **plagiarize** at Durham College, you can lose marks, lose a credit, or even be dismissed from the college.

You can avoid plagiarism by referencing or citing.

When you “**reference**” or “**cite**” (the words mean almost the same thing), you indicate exactly where you found the information you're using in your paper, essay or report.

APA and MLA are the two styles used at Durham College for referencing and citing. Usually, APA is the format used in health, science and technology studies, while MLA is the format used in arts, business and humanities studies. Ask your professor which format you should be using.

In both formats, you show where you found your researched information by including an in-text citation right beside your researched information (or exact words in quotes) **AND** by including a complete reference on a Works Cited or References page at the end of your document.

What is an in-text citation?

Every time you use someone else's ideas or words in a paper, essay or report, you must include an **in-text citation** in brackets beside your researched information, so that the reader quickly knows where the information came from.

In MLA format, the in-text citation normally includes the author's last name and the page number, while an APA in-text citation normally includes the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number. This can change depending on the source, so always check the library's downloadable MLA or APA guide to find out how to write your in-text citation.

What is the "**References**" or "**Works Cited**" page?

References and Works Cited pages list all the sources you cited for your paper, essay or report. You use a "References" page when you are using the **APA** format and a "Works Cited" page when you are using the **MLA** format. You include the "References" page or the "Works Cited" page at the end of your document.

The format you use to list your sources will change depending on whether your source is a book, an article, a webpage or some other source. Check the library's downloadable APA or MLA guide to find out how to write all your references for the References or Works Cited page.

At Durham College, you will often need to use other authors' words and ideas in your papers, essays or reports. We hope that this video has helped you understand how to do this by summarizing, paraphrasing, using direct quotations... and – of course – by always, *always*, ALWAYS referencing or citing your work using the MLA or APA format.

Happy writing