

**APSU Writing Center**  
Paraphrasing and Summarizing

**Paraphrasing**

- **Paraphrasing** is rewriting someone else's words or ideas in your own words. The meaning stays the same, but the explanation reflects your understanding.
- **Always cite** your source, even when paraphrased, to avoid plagiarism.

**When to Paraphrase**

- The ideas matter more than the exact words.
- The original text is technical or hard to understand.
- A quote is too long or wordy.
- You want to clarify the idea.
- The source is unknown.

**How to Paraphrase**

- Identify the key information for your point.
- Rewrite it in your own words, don't just change a few words.
- Make it clear that the idea comes from someone else.
- Preserve the original meaning and emphasis.
- Cite the source following the assignment's formatting style.

**Example 1**

- **Direct Quote:** "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."
- **Paraphrase:** In the closing of his inaugural address, President Kennedy implored both Americans and people from other nations to put aside their personal interests to work for the common good.

**Example 2**

- **Direct Quote:** "It's a great idea, but the essay was written in 1910...very technical and wouldn't fit into the flow of your paper..."
- **Paraphrase:** Even if a source has great ideas, outdated or technical language may not fit your paper. Paraphrasing lets you include the idea with proper citation, while using your own voice.

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**Summarizing**

- **Summarizing** condenses the main ideas of a source into a few sentences in your own words.
- Unlike paraphrasing, summaries provide a broad overview rather than detailed restatements.
- **Always cite** the original source, both in-text and on your reference page.

**When to Summarize**

- To provide background information or an overview of a topic.
- To explain general knowledge about a topic.
- To identify the main points of a source.

**How to Summarize**

- Read the passage carefully, at least twice.
- Highlight the main ideas and key points.
- Rephrase the main points in your own words.
- Cite the original source.

**Example 1**

- **Direct Quote:** "Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni...was an Italian Renaissance painter, sculptor, architect, poet, and engineer..."
- **Summarized:** Michelangelo was an Italian painter and sculptor during the Renaissance period. His vast talents, skills, and artistry established precedence for future artists, which is why he is thought of as the Renaissance man.

**Example 2**

- **Direct Quote:** "The Industrial Revolution, which began in Britain in the late 18th century, marked a major turning point in history. Almost every aspect of daily life was influenced, from the way people worked and lived to how goods were produced and consumed. Innovations in machinery, transportation, and communication transformed economies and societies across the globe."
- **Summarized:** The Industrial Revolution, starting in 18th-century Britain, dramatically changed work, daily life, and production worldwide through innovations in technology and transportation.



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### References

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