

Avoiding Plagiarism

Most students plagiarize work by accident; they simply don't know how to properly integrate sources. In truth, source integration is pretty easy once you know how to do it.

Three types of source integration

Sources may be integrated through

1. Summarizing
2. Paraphrasing
3. Quoting

Each type of integration must be developed in a particular way, and each requires a signal phrase and in-text citation or footnote.

Summarizing

When you summarize, you

1. collect the major points of the passage, section, article, or book, and
2. present them in your own words.

So how do you summarize?

Process

1. Read the passage, paying careful attention to headings, the introduction, paragraph topic sentences, and conclusions. If you have trouble with a longer passage, read shorter segments. Identify why the author has written the text or made the argument.
2. Read it again, making notes in the margins or on a separate sheet of paper, identifying the purpose of paragraphs, a few words that explain what's going on, etc.

3. **CLOSE THE BOOK OR SOURCE!**
When you look at the text, you tend to use the same words and sentence structures. **THIS IS PLAGIARISM!**
4. Discuss what you read, with the book closed, with a friend, or talk about it out loud to yourself. "This passage is about..." or "This author is arguing that..."
5. Write down what you understood the main points of the passage or section to be.
6. Open the book or source and compare your notes to the source, including introduction, topic, and conclusion. Do you capture the main points? Repeat this activity until you have captured all the main points in your own words.

So now you've got it summarized. However, you still need to signal and cite it in your text. If you don't it will still be plagiarized!

Signaling & Citing Summaries

A signal phrase leads your reader into the summary, paraphrase or quote. It will often refer to the author or, at least, the title of the work, and will incorporate a verb, such as states, argues, explains, etc. Here are some examples (underlining identifies components only! Don't underline your signal phrases!):

MLA/ Chicago Note:

Koch argues that...
According to Green, ...

APA/ Chicago In-Text:

Koch (2008) argues that...
According to Green (2009), ...

Check your handbook or style guide, or study sample articles or essay to see more signal phrase options.

Summaries draw together the main points from across many pages of a work and put them in your own words. Because specific pages cannot be identified in a summary, there is no need to include page numbers.

Synthesis

When you read several sources that all agree on many overall summary points, you may wish to synthesize them into a single summary. To do this, follow the *Process* steps from earlier, making sure that ALL the points of agreement appear in ALL the sources you use.

Signal by identifying all sources in the signal phrase (again, underlining identifies components only!):

MLA/ Chicago Note:

Studies by Koch, Green, and Coates agree that...

APA/ Chicago In-Text:

Studies (Coates, 2007; Green, 2010; Koch, 2008) agree that...

Paraphrasing

Paraphrases are different from summaries in one way: instead of capturing the major points from across the text, a paraphrase

1. focuses on putting a small portion of text – a single paragraph or a few sentences --
2. in your own words.

The Process for writing a paraphrase is the same as it is for writing a summary.

Signal phrases for paraphrases are the same as they are for summaries.

Unlike summaries, paraphrases CAN NOT be synthesized.

In-text citation, however, requires page numbers or numbered notes. This is because a specific passage can be referenced.

MLA:

... paraphrase ends here (42).

Chicago Footnote:

... paraphrase ends here.¹

APA:

... paraphrase ends here (p. 42).

Notes:

1. APA style requires a “p.” whereas MLA does not.
2. In MLA and APA, the period goes outside the parentheses. It marks the end of the thought.
3. In Chicago, the superscript number should be tied to a footnote or endnote.

See your handbook, style guide, a credible web resource, or your writing center for more information.

Quotations

Quoted materials may have been popular in high school, but in college and in the working world, summaries and paraphrases are often preferred. Check the style of your discipline to find out more, but overall, keep the following rules in mind.

1. Quote a passage when you are going to analyze and discuss the exact words.
2. Quote a passage when it is so perfect that you cannot summarize or paraphrase it.

DO NOT quote a segment of text to fake something that you don't understand. Instead, dissect the passage and use a dictionary to determine the meaning of words, and discuss it with peers and professors until you have the meaning.

After you select a quote, you will still need to signal it and provide footnotes or in-text citation.

Signal phrases for quotations are done the same as for summaries and paraphrases.

Quotations, like paraphrases, ARE NOT synthesized.

Like paraphrases, in-text citation requires page numbers or numbered notes. This is because a specific passage can be referenced.

MLA:

... quotation ends here” (42).

Chicago Footnote:

... quotation ends here.”¹

APA:

... quotation ends here” (p. 42).

Notes:

1. Quotation marks go before the parenthetical page number in MLA and APA, as well as before the numbered note in Chicago style.

See your handbook, style guide, a credible web resource, or your writing center for more information.

Source:

Harris, M. (2007). *The Prentice Hall reference guide for professional writing*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.