

Paraphrasing and Documentation

One of the main features of a research paper or documented essay—and what sets it apart from all other types of writing—is that it contains information from outside sources as well as the writer’s own thoughts. Most of this information is **paraphrased** (put into the writer’s own words) and some information may be **directly quoted** (copied word for word as it appears in the source). No matter which way the information is presented in the paper, paraphrased or directly quoted, it **must be documented**. Anything that you state in your paper (that you did not know before you began your research and that is not considered common knowledge) must be documented, or else you have plagiarized.

When you paraphrase, you put the ideas of others into your own words. You do not simply rearrange the words of the original idea. In order to paraphrase correctly, you need to follow these steps:

1. Read the material through thoroughly and look up any unfamiliar words you do not understand.
2. Without looking at the original, write the material in you own words. Be sure to change the sentence structure and use words that you are comfortable with and that you know the meaning of.
3. Check your paraphrasing against the original to make sure that it correctly expresses the ideas of the original. Do NOT misrepresent your sources.

You may have to summarize some of the material you wish to include in your paper. When you **summarize** material, you once again put it into your own words, condensing it from many words to just a few. When you **paraphrase**, you put the material into your own words, but you do not necessarily change the length of the material. You **summarize** when you want to include just the main ideas presented in the source material; you **paraphrase** when you need to include more detailed information.

Remember that you will paraphrase or summarize most of the information that you use in your essay. There are, however, times **when you will need to use a direct quotation**, such as (1) when the source says it best and you can think of no better way to say it, or (2) when paraphrasing would take more words than the original.

If you quote an authority, try to qualify him or her in your lead-in—that is, make sure the reader know that the quoted person is actually an expert in the field and not some “man-on-the-street” that you found because you had to have a direct quote in your paper. Always answer the question, “What qualifies this person to speak on this subject?”

Avoiding Plagiarism

One of our goals in this project is to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism offers the words or ideas of another person as one’s own. It is a serious violation of scholarly and academic ethics—and it’s illegal.

An obvious form of plagiarism is copying any direct quotation from your source material without providing quotation marks and without crediting the source. A more subtle form, but also improper, is the paraphrasing of material that is not appropriately introduced and documented. Your use of source materials requires you to heed the following rules:

1. **Use lead-ins.** Acknowledge borrowed material within your text by introducing the quotation or paraphrase with the name of the authority from whom it was taken. This practice serves to indicate where the borrowed material begins.
2. Enclose all quoted materials in quotation marks. Quoted materials include when you quote what someone says and when you copy from an article word for word.
3. Make certain that paraphrased material is rewritten with fidelity to the original meaning but in different words. The simple rearrangement of sentence patterns is unacceptable.

4. Provide specific documentation for each borrowed item.
5. Provide a bibliography entry on your **Works Cited** page for every book, internet source, magazine article, or other source referred to (cited) in your paper. Every source that is cited in parentheses in your paper **must** appear on the Works Cited page. By the same token, every source that appears on the Works Cited page must be cited in your paper. The two **MUST** match.

Preparing the Works Cited Page

The last page of your paper will be the Works Cited page. On this page, you will list all the sources you **cited** in writing this paper. The steps are very simple:

1. Arrange your source cards in **alphabetical order**.
2. Center the title Works Cited on your page an inch from the top. (Do not include a heading on this page.)
3. Double-space everything beginning with the title and extending through and between entries. Do **not** skip any extra spaces.
4. Type or write the entries exactly as they appear on your source cards, including the hanging indentation, punctuation, and date format.

EXAMPLE:

Works Cited

Berardinelli, James. "Cinderella Man." *ReelViews*, www.reelviews.net/reelviews/cinderella-man. Accessed 22 Jan. 2017.

Ebert, Roger. "Cinderella Man." *RogerEbert.com*, Ebert Digital, 2 June 2005, www.rogerebert.com/reviews/cinderella-man-2005. Accessed 22 Jan. 2017.

Koehler, Robert. "The Lord of the Ring." *Variety*, 23 May 2005, pp. 30+.

Lane, Anthony. "Looking for Heroes." *The New Yorker*, 6 June 2005, p. 106. *Gale In Context: High School*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A133710618/GPS?u=tel_k_cmsmb&sid=bookmark-GPS&xid=fba6085f. Accessed 3 Feb. 2023.

LaSalle, Mick. "Howard's Knockout Film Is No *Cinderella* Fairy Tale." *SFGate*, San Francisco Chronicle, 3 June 2005, www.sfgate.com/movies/article/Howard-s-knockout-film-is-no-Cinderella-fairy-2666013.php. Accessed 22 Jan. 2017.

Rechtshaffen, Michael. "Cinderella Man." *Hollywood Reporter*, 20 May 2005, pp. 10+.

Schwarzbaum, Lisa. "Cinderella Man (2005)." *Entertainment Weekly*, 1 June 2005, ew.com/article/2005/06/01/cinderella-man-4/. Accessed 22 Jan. 2017.