Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Study Sheet

Summarizing

A summary provides a brief background of the material you have just read, watched or listened to. It should sum up the major points without giving your audience too much and it should ignore irrelevant information. You should summarize when:

- Trying to provide an overview of the topic
- Trying to provide more context or information of the topic

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing involves outside ideas from different people and sources in your writing. You have to dramatically change sentence structure, wording and phrasing to make the thought your own while still maintaining the outside source’s ideas. You should paraphrase when:

- Trying to make a passage clear or reiterate the context
- Giving a brief explanation of the original work
- You notice you have provided enough quotes and don’t want to overdo it

Quoting

Quotations involve directly copying a source, word for word. They must have quotation marks and appear in your writing just as it does in the original source. You should quote when:

- Trying to establish credibility of an author
- You want to showcase an author’s knowledge to support your stance
- Comparing and contrasting certain topics to provide evidence

From the Writing Center at the Academic Resource Center