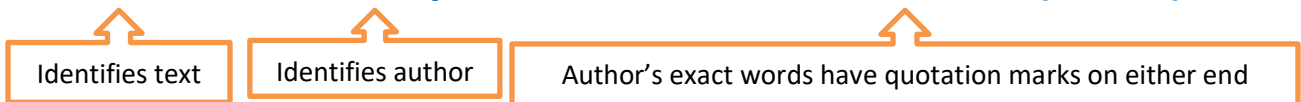# Western Writing Support Centre

Quoting Vs. Paraphrasing

Every piece of university writing participates in an informed debate on a particular topic, and you will want to show how your paper fits into that debate by incorporating the ideas and opinions of other authors. These ideas and opinions are what make your claims persuasive, so you will want to include them in your paper by **quoting** or **paraphrasing** the original authors' words.

Quoting: A quotation is an exact reproduction of spoken or written words. Whenever you include another person's words in your paper, you **must** indicate the extent of the reproduction by including quotation marks ("…") on either end of the statement and then <u>citing the source</u>. **<u>Failing to include quotation marks where needed could result in accusations of plagiarism.</u>**

Ex. In the book _Walden_, Thoreau says that, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

Identifies text	Identifies author	Author's exact words have quotation marks on either end

Note: Best practice is to incorporate a short quotation into a sentence of your own creation as in the above example. Quotations longer than <u>three lines</u> should be formatted so that they start on a new line, they should be indented, and they should be single-spaced.

Direct quotes are often necessary when the information you want to cite from another text can be interpreted in a number of different ways. In a **Literature** or **Film** essay, for example, you may want to quote an important statement by a particular character and then explain to your reader how to understand what the character actually meant by their words. However, even in this situation, you will want to use quotations sparingly, and not allow other writers' words to dominate your paper. In other disciplines, especially **the Sciences**, quoting should be avoided for the most part. Instead, use paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing: A paraphrase conveys the same meaning as another person's original words but without using those same words. As with quotations, paraphrases **must be cited** according to their original sources. Because many students find the technique of paraphrasing difficult, instructions are included below:

1) Always **read** the original source in its entirety;
2) **Understand** what it is saying;
3) Put the original source **away** where you cannot refer to it;
4) **Write out** an explanation of the idea in that source as though you were explaining that idea to a friend;
5) **Edit** and **revise**

Step 4 in this process is often difficult because some students cannot decide which information in the original should be included in the paraphrase. In this case, use **W5** to determine what is important.

Using W5:

1) **What** is the sentence about?
2) **Who** is acting or affected by the action?
3) **When** does this action occur?
4) **Where** does this action occur?
5) **Why** does this action occur?
6) **How** does this action occur?

Ex. **The future widespread application of robotically-assisted surgical systems will allow patients to recover more quickly, and with fewer complications, from procedures that are specifically designed to be minimally-invasive and that, therefore, limit the extent of tissue damage and possibility of infection**.

1) **What** = robotically-assisted surgical systems
2) **Who** = patients
3) **When** = the future
4) **Where** = widespread
5) **Why** = faster recovery with fewer complications
6) **How** = minimally-invasive procedures

In your own words:

1) **What** = robotically-assisted surgical systems
2) **Who** = those people
3) **When** = soon
4) **Where** = everywhere?
5) **Why** = faster rates of recovery with less risk of infection or tissue damage
6) **How** = minimally-invasive procedures

Note that the terms for **What** and **How** remain the same because they are proper nouns.

Now, without looking at the original source, you can write new sentences based on these answers.

Citation

Paraphrase of Original Ex. **Smith (2010) argues that those people soon undergoing minimally-invasive procedures made possible through robotically-assisted surgical systems will experience faster rates of recovery with less risk of infection or tissue damage.**

Remember! Whether you choose to directly **quote** another person's words or convey the basic idea of their words with a **paraphrase**, you absolutely **MUST cite** the source of the information you are borrowing from that person. In all cases, you are citing the person's ideas and not their specific words. With both quoting and paraphrasing, failure to properly cite can result in accusations of **plagiarism**.