

Integrating Sources into Your Writing

Summarizing, Quoting, Paraphrasing, Explaining, and (Not) Patchwriting

While we shouldn't always stick to formulas, here's a 4-step strategy for incorporating sources into your academic writing that you can use and/or adapt as needed.

1. First, **start with YOU**, not the source. Write a sentence (or two or three) that introduces the claim YOU will explore (perhaps through a [topic sentence](#) or [transition sentence](#)).
2. **Introduce the source** by summarizing the rhetorical situation and main argument of the source. Refer to the [2-Sentence Rhetorical Summary](#) handout for tips!
3. **Transition to the *specific* idea** from your source that you want to focus on. You can either provide a quote and/or a paraphrase that connects to the specific idea.

QUOTING

When quoting, don't just throw in the whole quote as a whole sentence. Instead, embed the quote within your own sentence. Consider using these **templates for embedding quotes**:

● On page 5, X states/argues, " _____ " ● As X puts it, " _____ " (5). ● According to X, " _____ " (5). ● X herself writes, " _____ " (5). ● X maintains that " _____ " (5).	● In X's view, " _____ " (5). ● X illustrates this when she writes, " _____ " (5). ● X contradicts this when he claims, " _____ " (5). ● X complicates matters further when positing that " _____ " (5).
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Of course, you should be picky when choosing the quotations you will use.

And be sure to include the page number!

PARAPHRASING

Sometimes a quote won't work—perhaps it's too long or you've already quoted a lot and need to "shake things up" and vary your writing. So you can instead **paraphrase** the specific idea by *restating it in your own words, making sure to considerably change the language and syntax* (the ordering of the words). And be sure to include the page number, even when paraphrasing! (Need more help? Check out this [introduction to paraphrasing](#).)

PATCHWRITING

Most of us struggle to paraphrase (it's hard!), so we might fall into what some call **patchwriting**: when writers restate sentences using *some* of their own words but relying *too closely* to the original language and/or syntax (the ordering of words) of the source. Check out this **example**:

Original Text	Patchwritten Sentences	Effective Paraphrase
from David H. Freedman (2010) on page 35 of his book, <i>Wrong</i> .	Aim to NOT do this:	Aim to DO THIS instead:
Studies about everyday experts ranging from doctors to pilots to loan officers suggest that it's actually automaticity that tends to separate the highly experienced expert from the novice, rather than the ability to eventually come to the right conclusion.	Freedman (2010) says studies about typically trusted experts show that it's actually automaticity that truly separates the seasoned experts from novices, rather than the skill of coming to the right conclusion (p. 35).	According to Freedman (2010), studies show us that the main advantage seasoned experts have over novices is not capability but what he calls "automaticity" (p. 35). In other words, Freedman questions whether the ability to provide fast answers should indicate expertise.

Notice how the patchwritten version is just too similar to the original, so much so that some professors would call this plagiarism. Paraphrasing is harder to do, but it's an important skill that you'll use a lot in academic writing. So aim for paraphrasing and avoid patchwriting.

Whew! That was a lot of info already! The first three steps above can be done in 3-6 sentences. But **you're not done yet!** You still need to...

4. **Explain how your source's specific idea connects** to YOUR perspective and/or to another source's perspective. Maybe it *supports*, *extends*, *complicates* or *challenges* the specific idea you or another source has raised. Consider the **below templates** that may help you get explicit about what you want your reader to consider in terms of your claim.

- The essence of X's argument is that _____, which helps to show _____.
- X's concept about _____ can be applied to my question about _____.
- X's point is relevant to my reasoning that _____ given that _____.
- What's worth emphasizing about this idea is how it connects to _____.
- This challenges/complicates Author Y's assertion that _____.
- This supports/extends my claim that _____.