

**Laurier Brantford Centre for Student Success Writing Handout  
Summaries, Paraphrases and Quotations: What to Use and When**

**When to Summarize, Paraphrase or Quote and Why**

In the humanities, writers often prefer to use quotations in their papers because both *what is said* and *how it is said* are being analyzed. In contrast, writing in the sciences and the social sciences involves more summarizing and paraphrasing because *what is said* is the main focus. Of course, quoting is still acceptable in the social sciences if used purposefully.

Writers incorporate quotations, summaries and paraphrases in their writing in order to provide textual evidence, to strengthen claims, and to present different points of view. Although an occasional quotation is fine, using summaries and paraphrases requires students to write in their own words, which demonstrates their deeper understanding of concepts and maintains their voice throughout their writing.

**Summaries, Paraphrases and Quotations**

	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Paraphrase</b>	<b>Quotation</b>
<b>Length</b>	Shorter than the original text	Can be as long or longer than the original text	The exact same length as the original passage you are using
<b>What to Include</b>	Main idea in your own words	All important details in your own words	The exact wording from the original passage
<b>When to Use</b>	When you need your reader to have a general overview of the material, rather than an understanding of a specific passage or point	When providing evidence from a work where <i>what is said</i> is most important, not <i>how it is said</i>	When <i>what is said</i> and <i>how it is said</i> are both important or when you could not word it any better than the author
<b>Citation?</b>	Yes (at the end of the summary)	Yes (at the end of the paraphrase)	Yes (at the end of the quote)

**Examples of Quoting, Summarizing and Paraphrasing**

**Original Text:**

“The Panopticon is a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analysing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them. The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms. In this central tower, the director may spy on all the employees that he has under his orders: nurses, doctors, foremen, teachers, warders; he will be able to judge them continuously, alter their behaviour, impose upon them the methods he thinks best; and it will even be possible to observe the director himself. An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning” (Foucault 204).

**Summary:**

Foucault's Panopticon model illustrates the behaviour modifying results that arise from the threat of surveillance (Foucault 204).

Note: This is a good summary because it is short, mentions the main idea, and is cited.

**Paraphrase:**

Foucault describes the Panopticon as a tool of surveillance used to assess, modify, and reinforce peoples' behaviour and its own operation. In this model, a person stands in a central tower where he or she can easily see all other people and objects in the room. From this central vantage point, at any moment a person can determine the effectiveness of the disciplinary system and structure (Foucault 204).

Note: This is a good paraphrase because it relays the main details of the original passage and it is cited.

**Quote:**

Foucault describes the Panopticon as "a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analysing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them" (204).

Note: This is an appropriate way to integrate a quote because there is a lead-in to the quote, the meaning of the passage is not altered, and the quoted material is cited.

For more detailed information on effective integration of quoted material, consult our *Quotation Integration* handout.

**Works Cited**

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1977. Print.