

## SECTION 3: CORRECT INTEGRATION OF SOURCE MATERIAL

In addition to documenting your sources correctly with a bibliography and in-text citations, another key to avoiding plagiarism and using your sources ethically is integrating the source material effectively. Integrating source material means that you combine it with your own voice in a way that is accurate, thorough, and stylistically effective (that is, your ideas and your source material flow smoothly together), all while avoiding plagiarism. Integrating source material effectively includes the following:

- **Quoting** source material accurately and correctly
- **Paraphrasing and summarizing** source material accurately, thoroughly, and correctly
- **Documenting** *all* source material, including quotations, paraphrases, *and* summaries
- **Providing transitions** to source material

It is essential to integrate your sources effectively regardless of what documentation style you are using (MLA, APA, Chicago Style, etc.). For the sake of consistency and simplicity, the examples in this section use MLA style when a citation is necessary. See Section 2 of this tutorial for a discussion of documentation.

### How do you quote from sources correctly?

Quoting simply means that you are using the exact words of a source. **IMPORTANT:** Before you quote from a source, keep in mind that you should use quotations *only* for particularly important or well-expressed ideas in a source or for technical information for which the exact wording is important. *In other words, avoid overusing quotations.*

- **Don't rely too much on quotations in your introduction.** A quotation might generate interest at the beginning of a paper or speech. However, most of your introduction should provide context and background information.
- **Don't use a quotation in place of your own thesis statement.** A thesis statement should be your own wording that sums up your overall point.
- **Don't use a quotation as a topic sentence for an individual paragraph or point.** As with a thesis statement, a topic sentence should sum up the paragraph or point in your own words.
- **Don't end a paragraph or point with a quotation.** It's usually better to wrap up with a final comment or summary sentence of your own that helps transition to the next point.
- **Don't rely too heavily on quotations in your conclusion.** A quotation might help with a memorable ending, but conclusions should primarily reinforce your own thesis and main points.

Too many quotations actually can *lower* your grade rather than make a project stronger.

Quotations seem like an easy option: just copy and paste. However, using a few short quotations is more effective than allowing quotations to make up most of a paper or other project. If you

quote too often or use multiple long quotations, your instructor will likely see the quotations as filler and conclude that you've taken the easy way out or didn't have enough ideas of your own.

On the positive side, you *should* use quotations when doing so helps inform and convince your reader or listeners. In a paper or speech, quotations are most commonly and frequently used in the body sections to support topic sentences or main points.

If it is appropriate to use a quotation, here are some keys to doing so effectively:

- **Be accurate:** Though misquoting someone technically isn't plagiarism, it is a serious and unethical misuse of a quotation and a misrepresentation of what a source actually said. Here are a few tips for making sure your quotations are accurate, especially in writing:
  - When possible, copy and paste the quotation from an electronic source, but be sure to adjust the type size and font to meet your paper's format requirements.
  - For a quotation from a print source or one that doesn't allow you to copy and paste, carefully compare your quotation to the original passage for accuracy. Check everything: wording, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.
  - If you leave any words out of a quotation, let your reader know by using ellipsis points (. . .). If you change part of the quotation (capitalization, for example) or add something to a quotation to clarify its meaning or fit it more effectively into your writing, use square brackets, [like these]. Of course, you should never use ellipsis points or brackets to change the meaning of a quotation.
- **Use quotation marks.** It might seem obvious, but the only way a reader can know that you've used someone else's exact words in your own writing is if you surround them with quotation marks, which "look like this."

**PLAGIARISM ALERT:** Using a source's exact words in writing without using quotation marks is a form of plagiarism, even if you provide documentation. Without quotation marks, the reader assumes that the words from the source are *your* words and phrases. **In other words, without quotation marks, you are taking credit for the actual writing of the source, that is, plagiarizing the words of the source.**

- **Provide documentation.** Use the appropriate documentation format to provide in-text citations for *all* quotations and to list on a bibliography *all* the sources you quote. See Section 2 of this tutorial for more information.

**PLAGIARISM ALERT:** Using a source's exact words without providing documentation is also plagiarism, even with quotation marks. Though the quotation marks show that you used exact words, by themselves they do not indicate whose exact words they are.

Note the examples below:

Original Passage (from the “Academic Integrity” section of the *IVCC Student Handbook*):  
Plagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally.

Inaccurate Quotation:

The *IVCC Student Handbook* states, “Plagiarism is simply defined as using words and ideas of another as your own either on purpose or unintentionally” (“Academic Integrity”).

In this example, documentation is included, indicating that the passage came from a particular section of the *Handbook*. However, what is inside the quotation marks does not exactly match the original passage (see the underlined portions). Though this quotation technically isn’t plagiarized, it is a misuse and misrepresentation of the source.

Plagiarized Words (No Documentation or Quotation Marks):

Plagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally.

In this case, the original passage has simply been copied, no quotation marks have been used for exact words, and no documentation has been included to indicate where the words and ideas came from. It appears that that this passage didn’t come from a source at all, which is clearly not the case.

Plagiarized Words (Documentation Included but No Quotation Marks):

The *IVCC Student Handbook* states, plagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally (“Academic Integrity”).

Here documentation is included. However, without quotation marks, it is still plagiarism because there is no way to tell that the wording itself came directly from the source.

Correct Quotation with No Plagiarism:

The *IVCC Student Handbook* states, “Plagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally” (“Academic Integrity”).

Here, finally, the quotation is accurate, quotation marks are used, *and* documentation is included. Therefore, the source and the quotation are used correctly and are not plagiarized.

**IMPORTANT:** If you are giving a speech or creating some other kind of project (not a paper), ask your instructor for any special instructions for quoting accurately, indicating exact words, and documenting quotations.

## **How do you paraphrase and summarize from sources correctly?**

Paraphrasing means you are putting a source’s ideas into your own words, phrases, and sentence structure. A paraphrase is usually about the same length as the original source material and is typically used for relatively short passages.

Summarizing means you are putting a source's ideas into your own words, phrases, and sentence structure *and* keeping only key ideas, essentially a condensed paraphrase. A summary is shorter than the original passage (a few sentences instead of a whole paragraph, for example).

To avoid overusing quotations, you should paraphrase or summarize *most* of the source material you use. Doing so allows you to borrow a source's ideas, but expressing them in your own style helps them flow better in your project with your own ideas. Paraphrasing and summarizing your source material also tells an instructor that you actually read and understood your sources, that you put in the time and effort to do more than copy and paste source material as quotations, *and* that you have strong enough writing skills to put source material into your own style.

As with quotations, paraphrases and summaries are most often used to support topic sentences or main points, rather than dominating introductions and conclusions or being used in place of your own thesis statement and topic sentences.

Once you decide to use a paraphrase or summary, here are some keys to doing so effectively:

- **Don't use quotation marks.** Because you are not using the exact words of a source in a paraphrase or summary, you should *not* use quotation marks. Using quotation marks in this case would be claiming the source said something it didn't.
- **Be accurate.** Because you are using your own style to communicate the ideas of a source, accuracy in paraphrasing and summarizing means that you must communicate the same meaning as the original passage. In other words, you must not change the meaning when you change the words, phrases, and sentence structure.
- **Be thorough.** A really common mistake in paraphrasing and summarizing is to change only a few words, keep some of the same original words or phrases, or just replace words but keep the original sentence structure of the source. To have a thorough paraphrase, you need to use your own words, phrases, *and* sentence structure. In other words, you need to paraphrase the passage *thoroughly* in your own style. The only exceptions would be common words (such as *a, an, the, of,* etc.) or words that simply have no acceptable replacement (such as people's names, place names, and technical terms).

If you find a unique word or phrase from the original passage impossible to change, include it in your paraphrase or summary, *but make sure to place just that word or phrase in quotation marks.*

**PLAGIARISM ALERT:** A paraphrase or summary that isn't thorough is a type of plagiarism. If your paraphrase or summary keeps some of the same words, phrases, or sentence structure as the original passage, without quotation marks, your reader will assume the words, phrases, or sentence structure are yours, not that of the original passage. **In this case, you would still be plagiarizing some of the source's words.**

Here are some tips for paraphrasing and summarizing accurately and thoroughly:

- Look up unfamiliar words in the passage and read it multiple times until you thoroughly understand it.
  - Write your paraphrase or summary without looking at the original passage.
  - Compare your paraphrase or summary to the original passage and ask: “Does my paraphrase or summary mean the same as the original passage?” “Have I thoroughly changed the words, phrases, and sentence structure?”
  - Work with your paraphrase or summary until you get it right *and you are sure it is not plagiarized*. It may take several attempts.
- **Provide documentation:** Use the appropriate documentation format to provide in-text citations for *all* paraphrases and summaries and to list on a bibliography *all* the sources you paraphrase or summarize. See Section 2 of this tutorial for more information.

**PLAGIARISM ALERT:** Some students mistakenly believe that, if they change the style of the original passage (that is, they paraphrase or summarize), they do not have to provide any documentation. *This belief is not true. Even though the words, phrases, and even sentence structure have been changed in a paraphrase or summary, the ideas are still from the source and must be documented.* Think back to Section 1 of this tutorial and the discussion of what would be considered plagiarism: “You would also be guilty of plagiarism if you put someone else’s ideas into your own words and then presented the ideas as though they were your own—paraphrased or summarized ideas without documentation.” **Plagiarism of ideas is just as serious as plagiarism of exact words.**

Note the examples below:

Original Passage (from the University Library of Iowa State University):

Take careful notes throughout your research process and as you begin drafting your paper. One good practice is to clearly label within your notes the ideas that are your own (e.g. writing "ME" in parentheses) and ideas and words from others (e.g. using a citation such as "Smith, 2005, p. 14" or something to indicate author, source, source date, and page number if there are pages). You'll need this information for your reference list or citations anyway, so you'll benefit from good organization from the beginning.

Inaccurate Paraphrase:

One source advises that a writer should plan out ideas before writing. Solid planning and outlining will help with stronger research, correct documentation, and a better paper overall (University Library).

In this example, the wording, phrasing, and sentence structure have been changed, and documentation is provided. However, this summary simply isn’t accurate. For example, the original passage never mentions outlining at all. The summary mentions a few similar ideas (research, documentation, and preparation), but it really is making a different, broader point about the writing process, not the more focused point the source actually is making about using sources.

Plagiarized Paraphrase (Not Thorough):

One source states that writers should take careful notes all the way through their research process and as they start drafting their paper. A good method is clearly labeling within notes ideas that are their own or words and ideas from sources. Writers will need this information for citations anyway, so they will benefit from good organization right from the beginning (University Library).

Notice that this plagiarized paraphrase changes some of the words, but not others. In addition, though some of the words are changed and sometimes even the order of words, the basic phrasing and sentence structure are very similar to the original. Overall, this paraphrase is simply too similar to the original source. Even with the documentation, this paraphrase is still plagiarized because the reader assumes without quotation marks that the wording, phrasing, and sentence structure have been thoroughly changed, but they have not.

Plagiarized Paraphrase (No Documentation):

In terms of note-taking, a writer should record which source a concept originates from as it is discovered, and it is advisable to indicate an original thought versus one that is from a source. These practices will also help with correct documentation.

This paraphrase is thorough, as the wording, phrasing, and sentence structure have been changed enough to drop the quotation marks and avoid plagiarizing the source's original language. However, without documentation, the writer is still using someone else's *ideas* as their own. Without any documentation, they are plagiarizing the *ideas* of the source.

Correct Paraphrase with No Plagiarism:

One source emphasizes the importance of note-taking by advising that a writer should record which source a concept originates from as it is discovered, also suggesting that it is advisable to indicate an original thought versus one that is from a source. These practices will also help with correct documentation (University Library).

Here, finally, the writer has paraphrased accurately and thoroughly *and* included documentation. Therefore, the source and the paraphrase are used correctly and are not plagiarized.

**How do you provide transitions to source material?**

Another part of integrating source material is making sure that the combination of your own writing and your source material is stylistically effective (that is, your ideas and your source material flow smoothly together). It's also important that your reader or listener knows when you are shifting from your own work to source material.

For these reasons, provide a transition to quotations, paraphrases, and summaries. In other words, begin with a phrase or sentence of your own to lead into the source material. If you don't do so, your paper, speech, or other project may be choppy, and it might be unclear where your ideas end and source material begins.

Below are three common, effective methods for providing a transition to source material:

- **A short phrase and a comma,**

The *IVCC Student Handbook* states, “Plagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally” (“Academic Integrity”).

As noted by the one reliable source, a writer should record which source a concept originates from as it is discovered (University Library).

- **A full sentence with a colon:**

The *IVCC Student Handbook* offers the following definition of plagiarism: “Plagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally” (“Academic Integrity”).

- **Phrasing of your own with no punctuation**

The *IVCC Student Handbook* strives to help students understand that “[p]lagiarism is defined as using the words or ideas of another as one's own either on purpose or unintentionally” (“Academic Integrity”).

The source advises writers to record which source a concept originates from as it is discovered (University Library).

Transitioning to source material in this way also helps prevent it from taking over, becoming a substitute for your own ideas, or being used as “filler” to take up space or meet a length requirement. Rather than dominating, the source material should supplement your own writing and voice as you integrate it correctly.

Below is a paragraph that illustrates source material correctly and effectively integrated into a paragraph. Notice that the paragraph is a mix of the writer’s own ideas and source material (in boldface). Also note that each source quotation and paraphrase is preceded by a transition to help it flow with the writer’s own ideas, as well as help identify it as source material. Finally, note that each quotation and paraphrase is documented to give the source credit.

Although research may seem to be of secondary importance to the actual writing of an essay, good research practices can actually make writing easier and, more importantly, can help prevent plagiarism before a word is written. **One source advises, “Take careful notes throughout your research process and as you begin drafting your paper” (University Library). To this end, they suggest indicating which source a concept originates from as it is discovered, also noting the following: “you'll need this information for your reference list or citations anyway, so you'll benefit from good organization from the beginning” (University Library).** Of course, not everything in a research paper will be from a source, as the writer will likely have ideas

about the topic, as well. **However, as the experts at Iowa State University suggest, it is advisable in one's notes to indicate an original thought versus one that is from a source, as well (University Library).** Also, in our increasingly digital world, a writer may find it helpful to use a browser's bookmark feature to save sources across different devices and organize them by project. While the impulse may be to collect the minimum number of sources as quickly as possible, taking the time to read thoroughly and being prudent about the quality of sources actually can ease the stresses of the writing process.

**PLAGIARISM ALERT:** Correctly integrating and documenting source material should always be part of doing your own work. Unfortunately, a common form of plagiarism is dishonestly using all or part of someone else's paper or project in place of one's own work. This someone might be a friend who had the same assignment, a "friend of a friend" at another school, a family member who writes a paper for the student, or even a complete stranger.

Sometimes, the other person's paper or project is from a "paper mill" website that gives away or sells previously written essays. Sometimes among the first "hits" in an online topic search, paper mill sites may state their papers should be used ethically and aren't meant for cheating. However, despite this disclaimer, that's exactly how they are often used. Even if you used a paper mill essay and documented it properly, it would not be considered credible, and using it would likely create suspicion of plagiarism. The best policy is to avoid paper mill sites altogether.

Obviously, students who turn in someone else's work as their own are being dishonest and are guilty of plagiarism, even if the work they are submitting correctly integrates and documents its sources. This one is common sense and, really, something most people learn as early as pre-school or kindergarten: Don't copy someone else's work.

## **What are the key takeaways from this section?**

- Quotations use the exact words of a source within quotation marks, must be accurate, should be used sparingly, and must be documented to avoid plagiarism.
- Paraphrases put a source's ideas into your own words, phrases, and sentence structure; summaries are condensed paraphrases. Both paraphrases and summaries must be accurate and thorough and must be documented to avoid plagiarism.
- You should provide transitions to quotations, paraphrases, and summaries so they flow smoothly with your own writing and so your reader can tell when you shift to your sources.
- Source material should supplement your own writing and voice, not dominate.
- Submitting work that you did not actually do yourself is always plagiarism.

It is your responsibility to use sources responsibly and to avoid plagiarism. Be honest, do your own work, take your time, use available resources like this tutorial, and ask questions. You can do it! Your papers, speeches, and other projects will be stronger for doing so, and you will gain a lifelong skill that will benefit you during your education and beyond.