

Writing From Sources



Writing Center

989-964-6061, www.svsu.edu/writingcenter

Academic honesty requires a writer to document all published sources of information for a paper, except information that falls within the “public domain,” such as common knowledge or information that is derived from class lectures, notes, or discussions. Documentation has two purposes: to establish the reliability and authority of the evidence a writer is using, and to allow the reader to locate that information, if he/she so chooses.

There are 3 ways to incorporate information from outside sources into your writing:

1) paraphrasing, 2) summarizing, or 3) quoting. All three methods require that you identify your sources in two ways:

- In-text citation (examples below are in MLA style), and
- Inclusion in the Works Cited (MLA) or References (APA)

Original source:

Writing tutorials replicate the social spaces and the symmetrical relationships of power--tutor and tutee are not on a level playing field. But although a “contact zone” understanding of the tutorial situation emphasizes the imbalance of power and expertise, the tutorial has the potential for becoming a safe house in the rather dangerous environs of the academic institution, a social space where meaning can be made, where risk-free learning can take place. The writing center may be one of the few comfort zones remaining in the university, a place for students to decompress (Wolff 45).

Paraphrase: A paraphrase is a restatement, in your own words rather than the words of the author, of the comments or ideas from a research source. A paraphrase is generally as long as the original.

Conventions:

- Use both your own terms and your own sentence structure.
- If you wish to include brief quoted material, use quotation marks.

For example:

Weak paraphrase:

Wolff considers the tutoring session to be a contact zone, in which there is an imbalance of power. Tutors, however, can downplay these differences by stressing academics less and working to create a comfort zone, where students can decompress (Wolff 45).
(Notice distorted meaning and the lack of quotation marks for quoted language.)

Good paraphrase:

When writer and tutor meet, they have unequal positions, socially and academically. However, rather than reflect inequities, a tutoring session can become a place where learning need not be stressful. Such a setting would become that rarity on campus, an academic “safe house” (Wolff 45).

Summary: A summary briefly and concisely, usually in a few sentences, conveys the key information found in a larger body of work. Again, a summary is written using your own words.

Conventions:

- State the core idea up front.
- Follow the organization of the original. (Outline the article so you can see the structure.)
- Use each sentence to summarize a key point.

For example:

Wolff points out that in a writing center a student can learn without the stress and risks inherent in other academic environments (Wolff 45).

Quote: To quote a person or a source document is to use the exact words of that person or source. Quotation should be used when

- a) you are presenting a passage for further analysis
- b) there is no other way to say something
- c) the source is a well-known authority who will support your claims, or
- d) the language would lose its power if you paraphrased.

To signal to the reader that these are not your own words or thoughts, use quotation marks or block quote format, together with in-text citation.

Conventions:

- The quotation must fit grammatically within your own sentence.
- A quotation should be “introduced,” not left hanging as a stand-alone sentence.
- Use ellipsis (. . .) to indicate that you have removed words.
- Do not use ellipses at the beginning or end of a quotation even if you have left off words, unless the quotation is longer than one sentence. Use brackets [] to indicate added or changed words.

Quotation:

Why would students spend so much time in the writing center? For some students, “the writing center may be one of the few comfort zones remaining in the university, a place for students to decompress” (Wolff 45).

Ellipsis and brackets:

Why would students choose to spend so much time in the writing center? For some students, perhaps it has become “one of the few comfort zones . . . a place for them to decompress” (Wolff 45).

Brackets:

Why would students spend so much time in the writing center? For some students, “ the writing center [may become a] place [for] students [to] decompress” (Wolff 45).

Work Cited: Wolff, Janice M. “Tutoring in the ‘Contact Zone’.” Stories from the Center: Connecting Narrative and Theory in the Writing Center. Eds. Lynn Craigue Briggs and Meg Woolbright. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 2000. 43-50.

Academic Dishonesty

Unethical writing practices, such as plagiarism, often occur when students do not correctly integrate information from research sources. Students plagiarize when they fail to provide in-text citations or references, or when they fail to use their own language when paraphrasing, or when they fail to mark the original language of a source with quotation marks or block quote format.

Such unethical writing practices are subject to the policies stated in the SVSU Student Handbook, **Section 1.8, Academic Dishonesty**.

