SUMMARY, PARAPHRASE, AND QUOTATION

Using outside sources is a powerful way to support ideas and build credibility in writing. There are three ways to present that information: summary, paraphrase, and quotation. It is important to know the differences between them and when and how to use them. As you learn to appropriately incorporate outside sources, your writing will improve.

SUMMARY

A summary condenses the overall concepts of another author’s work, leaving out any details that aren’t relevant to your argument. So, a summary does the following:

- captures the essence of an original idea in a shorter fashion
- indicates where the information originated via citation

Example: In his article, Jones discusses the importance of appropriate use of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation, claiming that it will improve writing.

PARAPHRASE

A paraphrase rewords an original passage without necessarily condensing it. You paraphrase when you wish to use a different tone, audience, or approach. So, a paraphrase does the following:

- retells, in your words, the concept of the original quotation
- makes the passage more accessible to different audiences
- indicates where the information originated via citation

Example: Mother said, “Please clean your room before your friends get here” (Jones). Mom told me I had to clean my room before my friends come over (Jones).

Remember: A paraphrase has to be entirely your words (not just a few changed words). It is plagiarism to use any of the authors’ words without quotation marks, so, when paraphrasing, be sure that you are using only your words.

DIRECT QUOTATION

Direct quotations state exactly what the original author said. However, they should be used sparingly, only when you can’t summarize or paraphrase the author’s words in a better way. So, a direct quotation does the following:

- quotes completely accurately using quotation marks to indicate the original author’s words
- uses brackets to add information ([ ]), ellipses to cut information (…), and [sic] to recognize errors