



# Summarize, Paraphrase, or Quote?

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*The MWC is a Writing Across the Curriculum initiative serving Northwest Vista College students, faculty, and the community through tutoring in writing skills, critical thinking, and building writing pedagogy. Effective writing is a cornerstone of education.*

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## Summary

A summary is a much shorter version of a long text. It is used to give an overview of the text, usually for a specific purpose.

### ***You should summarize when...***

You want to bring someone else's argument into your paper.

You need to describe a whole study, or a large part of it, not just the results.

You want to give a plot overview when writing about fiction or film.

You need to relate something that happened, without irrelevant details.

### ***Strategies for writing a summary***

Decide how you will use the summary in your paper.

Focus on the *main points* in the text, only bringing in details when relevant to your purpose and absolutely necessary.

Represent the author's meaning accurately and without commentary.

Use your own words.

Cite your source.

Pro Tip: A *focused summary* is more effective than a general summary because you will be more likely to include relevant information.

### **EXAMPLE:**

Schreier discusses the importance of *Suikoden II*, as well as its impact, in his article. He details the importance of the game to the genre of J-RPGs and the enjoyability of the game. He gives an objectively accurate account of the game.

## Paraphrase

A paraphrase is the restatement of someone else's ideas *in your own words*. Because you are not using the author's words, merely stating their ideas, you do not use quotation marks.

### ***You should paraphrase when...***

You want to include specific information from the text when the way that information is expressed (i.e. the language used) isn't important.

You need to relay statistical data.

You want to describe otherwise ordinary facts or information.

You need to relate someone else's narrative of events or experiences.

### ***Strategies for writing a paraphrase***

Decide how you will use the paraphrase in your paper.

Include the main points of the passage and all of the relevant details.

Reproduce the author's ideas accurately and without commentary.

Cite your source.

Pro Tip: Use paraphrases rather than quotations when you are relating statistical data.

### **EXAMPLE:**

*Suikoden II* is one of the greatest J-RPGs of all time. From the story to the look and feel of the game, *Suikoden II* is a standout in a long-running franchise (Schreier). Even for an older game, it still holds up as one of the most enjoyable of all time. The characters, the story, and the music all come together to form a memorable game experience. It took a while to come to the PlayStation Network, or PSN, due to the belief by Konami, the company that owns the rights to *Suikoden* franchise, that it wouldn't sell well (Schreier). Thanks to the dedication of fans, four of the five main series games became available to purchase on the PSN. The game and its world are wonderfully, beautifully assembled and still stand as a great experience in gaming (Schreier).

## Quotation

A quotation is the direct use of someone else's words in your own text. A quotation is always enclosed by quotation marks, and the words inside the quotation marks must be the *exact* words the author used.

### ***You should quote when...***

You want to relate information and the way it is expressed (i.e. the language used) is unique, evocative, or otherwise important.

You want to bring someone else's voice into your own work when their perspective or expertise is especially important.

### ***Strategies for quoting***

Think about why you want to quote rather than paraphrase.

Type the author's words with quotation marks around them.

Make sure you are using the quote in a way that accurately represents the author's meaning.

Check that the words you have put within the quotation marks are *exactly* what the author said.

Cite your source.

Pro Tip: Quote sparingly, since every quotation you use takes away from your own authorial voice.

### **EXAMPLE:**

"It's a journey that is simultaneously grandiose and intimate, somehow juggling both sweeping political machinations and close personal friendships without missing a beat" (Schreier).

### **Works Cited**

Schreier, Jason. "Why You Should Play Suikoden II, One Of The Best RPGs Ever Made." *Kotaku*, 9 Aug. 2015, <https://kotaku.com/why-you-should-play-suikoden-ii-one-of-the-best-rpgs-e-1668857424>. Accessed 1 June 2022.