**Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing**



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**Quoting, Paraphrasing & Summarizing** (MLA Format)

I. **Quotes** (purpose): authenticity, support, and accuracy

A. Use sparingly

B. Use to show authoritative support

C. Use when words, phrases, or passages are uniquely articulated

D. Use to show factual data that can in no other way be summarized or paraphrased.

II. **Summaries** (purpose): accuracy and efficiency

A. Provide succinct (brief) information

B. Draw attention to important points/ main issues

III. **Paraphrase**s (purpose): accuracy and comprehension

A. Draw attention to main idea

B. Emphasize key points

C. Communicate in a way that is understandable to your readers and that makes sense in the context of your essay/research paper.

IV. Finding **the main ideas** for paraphrases and summaries

A. What is the title?

B. What is the general topic of the complete written work (look for a thesis)?

C. What is each paragraph about?

1. Utilize Journalist’s questions: who, what when, where, why, how

2. Find a topic sentence: Did the writer provide one particular sentence to represent or guide this paragraph?

3. Find support: What are the details that help the reader understand?

D. What is the overall lesson of the written work?

V. The **process** of summarizing and paraphrasing. Note: summary is further reduced than paraphrase, but the importance of reflecting the original content is similar.

**A. Introduce**

1. Introduce the author and the title (use signal phrases)

2. Briefly identify the subject and the author’s assertion.

**B. Reduce**

1. State the key points from the written work.

2. Provide essential support—definitions, statistics, names, and dates.

3. Eliminate non-essential details, explanations, analogies.

**C. Re-write**

1. Focus on the author’s IDEAS, not their words.

2. Use your own words!

3. Choose words that are appropriate for the writing situation.

4. When incorporating into your own work, connect the summarized material with your own writing.

The following incorrect and then **correct** versions of quotes, paraphrases, and summaries are based on a quote by Martin Luther. Here is the original wording from Martin Luther King’s ―Letter from Birmingham Jail‖ excerpted from a collection of King’s speeches and writings:

**Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly*.*** (King 85 - 86)

MLA Works Cited Citation:

King, Martin Luther Jr. *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World*. Ed. James M. Washington. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992. Print.

**Don’t do this: “Dropped” quotation.** *It doesn’t introduce or acknowledge source****.***

People must feel a responsibility toward fellow human beings. ―We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny‖ (King 85).

***Do* This: Quotation with a signal phrase.**

An example of social responsibility may be taken from the words of Martin Luther King when he wrote, ―We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny‖ (85).

**Don’t do this: Inappropriate paraphrase.** *It copies the exact structure, switching out words for synonyms, and borrowing words (also, the citation should have his name because it is not in the sentence where the citation appears)*

King wrote that he was aware of the tight connection of all societies and regions. He could not sit back in Atlanta, Georgia without worrying about what happened in Birmingham, Alabama. Denial of justice in one place threatens justice in all places. All of us are trapped as if in a networking group linked to the same future. The things that affect one member affect all members (85).

***Do* This: Acceptable paraphrase.** *It shows the main idea and the key points.*

In his ―Letter from Birmingham Jail‖, Martin Luther King Jr. not only defends his own involvement with the Birmingham Boycotts of 1963, but also illuminates the importance of defending the common-good. King points out the ―interrelatedness‖ of U.S. citizens, regardless of where they might live, and then he shares his own sense of personal responsibility (85). He connects back to the public obligation toward preserving ―justice‖ (85) within the nation, and the shared consequences of inaction (85 – 86). King concludes, ―Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly‖ (86).

**Don’t do: Inappropriate summary.** *It borrows words and it doesn’t add a within text citation.*

Communities are interrelated. Not even Martin Luther King could sit back without feeling concern for Birmingham’s people because injustice anywhere affects all people.

***Do* This: Acceptable summary.** *It shows the main idea.*

Martin Luther King’s 1963 ―Letter from Birmingham Jail‖ not only defends his participation in acts of civil disobedience in Birmingham, but also brings attention to humanity’s ―interrelatedness‖ (85) and the social obligation of securing ―justice‖ (86) for all people (85 – 86).