9.12: Paraphrasing and Direct Quotations

You can incorporate the ideas of others into your writing by paraphrasing or using direct quotations. See Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Paraphrasing and direct quotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What it is?</th>
<th>Why use it?</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing involves presenting ideas from source material in your own words.</td>
<td>Paraphrasing can demonstrate your understanding of a text – its details and connections between its main points. It can also help you double-check the depth of your understanding of a text. For example, you might paraphrase an important idea from a source when you want to include it in an assignment, but also want to rephrase it in a way that matches your style without losing any key information.</td>
<td>A paraphrase must be entirely your own writing, not just words substituted into the same sentence structure, length, etc., used in the original text. Write paraphrases in sentence structures that are natural to you and true to your own writing voice. The only job of a paraphrase is to accurately represent the relevant idea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A quotation (sometimes called a direct quotation) is when you use the exact wording from a source. In If the original text is phrased in a way that is particularly powerful/vivid and paraphrasing would likely weaken it, You should generally limit your use of quotations. Don’t rely too heavily on them: most of your paper should
this case, you must be careful to exactly copy the source’s original language, word for word.

A direct quotation can be a good option. This is also true when the language of the original source is so special or unique that it can’t be reasonably rephrased.

A direct quotation can demonstrate that an authoritative source supports your point. It can also present an opposing view to your own for discussion: it can be useful to present opposing views as direct quotations to avoid the risk of personal bias affecting the language of a paraphrase.

Student Tip

It is generally best to paraphrase another person’s ideas as opposed to using a direct quotation. Paraphrasing shows that you have understood the source material and have situated it in the context of your own ideas. Many writers don’t include any direct quotations. Direct quotations should only be used when the idea can’t be expressed in any other way.

Activities: Check Your Understanding

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

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