Integrating Sources into your Writing

**Summarizing:** A summary is a brief explanation of what the source in its entirety says and accomplishes. The easiest way to approach summarizing is to think of the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of the source.

**Paraphrasing:** A paraphrase involves focusing on one specific part of a source and putting it into your own words. This doesn’t mean changing a few words (“patchwriting”)—if you’re unable to change the entire sentence structure, you may wish to quote it directly to avoid plagiarizing.

**Direct Quoting:** There are several occasions when quoting a source directly is a better option than summarizing or paraphrasing:

1. You’re providing specific examples from a text to help illustrate your point.
2. The quote is short, therefore paraphrasing or summarizing would be unnecessary.
3. The author of the source uses language or words that are powerful or persuasive—the meaning or emphasis would be lost if you put it into different words.
4. The quote is well known, and therefore the audience will know it.
5. You want to comment directly on the author’s language or words.

Don’t make the mistake of relying too heavily on direct quotes—too many within one paper give the impression that you’re unable to interpret or analyze sources for yourself!

**Steps to integrating a source:**

1. Introduce the source.
2. Incorporate the information you want to use from that source by summarizing, paraphrasing, or quoting directly.
3. Interpret the information you use from the source for your reader. How does it relate to the point you’re making? Connect it to your argument/ideas.
4. Document where the resource came from using in-text citations and a correlating entry on a works cited or reference page.

**In-text citations:** These give your reader just enough information so they can locate the full information on your works cited/reference page. In-text citations can be done in two ways:

* referencing the source directly within the sentence
* or, alluding to the source.

Examples (in MLA style):

**Bridget Gelms asserts that English 112 is an important class to take because understanding close reading and writing is a skill useful to all majors (31).**

This sentence refers directly to the author, meaning it’s not necessary to include the author information in the parenthetical citation. Instead, the “31” tells the reader that this paraphrase is located on page 31 in the source by Bridget Gelms.

**English 112 is an important class to take because close reading and writing is a skill useful to all majors (Gelms 31).**

The in-text citation at the end of the sentence tells me this idea comes from the source by Gelms on page 31.

*\*Notice that the period goes AFTER the parenthetical citation.*

For more on how to construct in-text citations and corresponding entries on a works cited/reference page, refer to the style guides in Niihak Resources under “Handouts,” or seek out more information on Purdue OWL.