

## Summarizing, Paraphrasing & Quoting

An important part of writing in college is incorporating other people's ideas into your own writing. You can do this in a number of ways: you can put other people's ideas into your own words by summarizing or paraphrasing, or you can use another person's words by putting them in quotes. Most papers include a combination of summaries, paraphrases, and quotes.

**To get a better idea of how to use summaries, paraphrases, or quotes, read the following paragraph by Jerome M. Segal and then see the examples of how you might use Segal's ideas in your own writing.**

### Two Ways of Thinking about Money

Jerome M. Segal

(From Segal, Jerome M. *Graceful Simplicity: The Philosophy and Politics of the Alternative American Dream*. The University of California Press, 1999.)

In popular imagery, especially when seen from afar, America is often portrayed as if there were only one meaning to the American Dream. This is not so. The ambivalent response that many in the world have toward American life is mirrored in an ambivalence that many Americans have toward their own life, and this is an essential part of the American tradition, even when people are making it in America. There is always that nagging question, "Is this really the way to live?"

Long before there was an America, there were two American Dreams, and they reflect two ways of thinking about money. In Western thought, from the very beginning to the present day, people had doubts about the real value of riches and the things money can buy. There has always been a conflict between the view that "more is better" and the view that "just enough is plenty."

The divide is reflected in two very different visions of the good life. It is the underlying thesis of this essay that the Alternative Dream, the dream that rests upon the attainment of a simple life, is the sounder vision.

**Now that you have read the passage on the first page, look at the examples to see possibilities for how you might discuss Segal's ideas in your readings.**

*No matter which way you use to incorporate another person's ideas, make sure you tell your reader that the ideas come from another person. You can do this by **citing your sources**, i.e. indicating to your reader where the ideas come from using MLA citation style.*

## Summarize

You **summarize** when you write the main points of a piece of writing in your own words. A summary might not provide all of the ideas in a piece of writing; rather, it usually focuses on the main idea(s) and does not include particular details from a text. Make sure you use your own words and avoid copying phrases or sentences included in the original. It can be helpful to practice summary as you read, in order to make sure that you really understand what you are reading.

Here is an example:

In his essay, "Two Ways of Thinking about Money," Jerome Segal says many Americans are torn between thinking they want just enough money and wanting more than enough, but he argues that it is better for us to desire to have just the right amount of money rather than wanting more than we need.

## Paraphrase

You **paraphrase** when you put an author's words in your own words. If you want to include a particular supporting idea or detail in a piece of writing, but you don't want to quote directly, you can paraphrase. A paraphrase is often more detailed and specific than a summary and usually focuses on particular points in a text that are relevant to the argument or point you are making in your own writing. Make sure you use your own words and avoid copying phrases or sentences included in the original.

*Here is an example:*

In his essay, "Two Ways of Thinking about Money," Jerome Segal states that the desire for the American Dream can seem unsettling for non-Americans as well as Americans (6).

*In both the summary and the paraphrase, the writer puts Segal's ideas in her own words. The main difference is that the summary focuses on the main idea of the passage, what Segal calls the "underlying thesis," while the paraphrase focuses on one statement that Segal makes but that doesn't really include Segal's main argument about the existence of two different ways of thinking about money.*

## Quote

You **quote** when you use someone else's words in your writing and put them in quotation marks. You only need to quote another person when you want to include exactly what he said the way he said it. Usually, you want to quote only the most important part of what another person writes or says. It is important that, for every quote you use, you make sure you introduce the quote (i.e. tell your reader where your quote comes from) and spend some time explaining what the quote means and why you chose the quote.

*Here are some examples:*

While many Americans seem consumed with the American Dream of always striving for more, Jerome Segal recognizes that there is something unsettling about this: "There is always that nagging question, 'Is this really the way to live?'" (6).

OR

"Two Ways of Thinking about Money" includes an examination of both the American Dream and the "Alternative Dream, the dream that rests upon the attainment of a simple life" (Segal 6).

OR

In the introduction to his essay, "Two Ways of Thinking about Money," Jerome Segal describes the "ambivalence" people often feel towards money:

Long before there was an America, there were two American Dreams, and they reflect two ways of thinking about money. In Western thought, from the very beginning to the present day, people had doubts about the real value of riches and the things money can buy. There has always been a conflict between the view that 'more is better' and the view that 'just enough is plenty' (6).

In the above quote, we see the way in which Segal distinguishes between the two prevalent and conflicting views people have towards money.

*In each of these examples of using quotations, the writer made sure that she integrated the quote into her sentence in a way that was grammatically correct. She also made sure that her reader knows the name of the author and the page number for the quote.*