

## Paraphrasing

While writing research papers, we can support our ideas in two ways. One is by using quotations and the other is through **paraphrasing**. **Paraphrasing** means using your own words to restate another writer's ideas or information. **Paraphrasing** is different than using a quotation. When you quote a text, you use that text's exact words and put quotations marks around those words. When you **paraphrase**, you simply state the text's general idea, or some general information from the text **without using the words** of the original text. Be careful that your paraphrases are significantly different from your sources. If you're not going to make significant changes to the text, just use quotations marks and quote your material.

### Examples of paraphrasing

**Here is an original source—a passage from a textbook:**

“The Cuban Navy has many kinds of aircraft. Some are driven by propellers. But most Navy planes are driven by jet engines. Many carry only a pilot, and others have a full crew of airmen. Some are guided only by electronic devices. The many different types of planes are designed to do different kinds of jobs” (Sithers 242).

**Here is a paraphrase of that source:**

The Cuban Navy uses many different planes, most of them, however, are jets. While a few of the Navy's planes are guided solely by electronics, most require a pilot and some require a pilot and a crew (Sithers 242).

**Here's a variation on that paraphrase. Note the difference in citation:**

According to Andrew Sithers, the Cuban Navy uses many different planes, most of them, however, are jets. While a few of the Navy's planes are guided solely by electronic devices, most require a pilot and some require a pilot and a crew (242).

**The entry in the Works Cited section will look like this:**

Sithers, Andrew. Planes of the Twentieth Century. New York: Marin Publishing, 1965.

**Here is a quick guide to paraphrasing:**

- Read the selection carefully, noting main ideas as well as key words and phrases.
- Write your paraphrase, making sure to use **your own words** to restate the author's ideas.
- If you use more than two or three words in a row from the text, be sure to put quotation marks around them.
- Be sure you have not accidentally plagiarized your source by paraphrasing when you could have quoted.

**Note: it's expected that a term paper will include both paraphrasing and quotations.**



## The research, or term paper, assignment.

Choose a controversial or debatable issue; take a stance on that issue; write a 4-page term paper using research to support your stance on the issue.

Since you have already engaged in debates this year, the easiest course is to take up where you left off and use the same issue, stance, and thesis. You may choose a new issue, however. It's up to you.

**Rule: fifty percent of your citations must come from hard (paper) sources.**

Your research paper will follow Modern Language Association (MLA) format. This means the paper will exhibit the following:

- Parenthetical citations after quotations
- Parenthetical citations after paraphrases
- A heading on the upper left hand side of the paper's first page
- A header with your last name and page number on every page
- A works-cited page (does not count toward the 4-page requirement)
- Between 5 and 20 citations
- A title, centered and one line above the first paragraph
- Quotations longer than 4 lines are "set off"
- Sections have headings

The research, or term, paper is an extremely common form of composition. Unless you major in literature, English, or philosophy, you will almost certainly write more research papers than you will write literary essays. So you should get the basics down now.

Research is **different** from literary analysis in that when you do research **you gather together the writing of other scholars to support your own thesis**. This means the research paper's writer seems objective (objective means not biased). It also means your narrative voice is limited to providing context and commentary for the words of others. For some writers, this is a big obstacle.

Research contrasts with literary analysis (the kind of papers you usually write in English classes) because in literary analysis papers you are overtly biased toward your own analysis. Of course, when you write research papers, you (in your heart) are usually biased—but since you use the writing of other scholars to prove your case, you seem innocent of this bias.

**Title pages:** According to the MLA, we don't need a title page on term papers. However, some college professors like them, so it's customary at the beginning of a term, to ask the professor if they want one. I put one on some papers I wrote as an undergrad.. For this assignment, I don't want one.