

Help with Quotations Handout

English 115 Quotation Handout

The final assignment in ENG 115 requires students to produce a documented essay complete with a separate works-cited page. Here are rules to follow when you either paraphrase or quote from others' work:

- You should paraphrase information unless the material is in language that you cannot easily put into your own words. According to Barbara Fine Clouse, "To paraphrase, you restate another author's ideas, using your own style and wording. Paraphrasing is useful because it helps you incorporate ideas from different sources into your essays to support your own ideas" (106). Do not add, subtract, or change the meaning of what you're paraphrasing.
- Use quotations when the writing is so distinctive that you can't paraphrase it well.
- You may paraphrase or quote part of a sentence, so long as doing so does not contradict the writer's meaning.
- Some faculty members at Wilson believe that paraphrasing is such a difficult cognitive task that they require students to use quotations. Do as they require.
- *All* paraphrases and quotations need to be cited. *Each* idea you take from someone else has to have a source in the body of the paper. Do not wait until the end of a paragraph to suggest that everything is from one source. Readers need markers all along that distinguish your ideas from those you've borrowed from others.
- You do not need to cite any knowledge that you possess. You wouldn't, for instance, cite the fact that Bran Stoker wrote *Dracula* or that Jonathan Harker journeys from London to Transylvania.
- Whether you paraphrase or quote, you will need to make a transition to the material—a step we have discussed at length. In the first bullet point above, I begin the sentence by naming Clouse. You can write, for instance, "According to Barbara Fine Clouse," "As Clouse observes," "Barbara Fine Clouse contends that". . . Your transition and quote should always be part of a complete, grammatically correct sentence.
- People paraphrase or quote so that they might report facts. That's fine. More often, a scholar's idea is put to argumentative purposes. In other words, the idea either offers evidence that supports your thesis or a point of view that opposes it. If it is opposing, you'll need to show why it's wrong.
- Sometimes an idea is so clear that it doesn't need analysis. Most times, though, you should follow a quotation from *Dracula* by explaining what it means or does. The way we've discussed this in class is by remarking on the differences that separate something that is "literal" from meaning that is figurative/symbolic.
- Students who assert that Mina Harker is a "gender monster" will want to quote from a weekly recap that defines what such a monster is like. (Doing so counts as a source.) They might cite an array of materials, should they also wish to suggest that she is a new woman. See, for example, Phyllis A. Roth's essay.

- Don't forget that you can also quote or paraphrase materials that deepen or complicate your position. Then of course you will again need to bring the argument back to your views by criticizing that information. Happy writing.

Larry Shillock