

How to Take Notes and Incorporate Other Sources

1. Skim your chosen material with your thesis in mind. Determine if it is relevant to your reasons. (Must either concede or refute).
2. Make your bibliographic entry (author, title, date published, location, pages).
3. Write down important ideas from your reading that relates to your reasons. You may find that the proof areas you thought might be developed are inadequate and new ones become apparent. This is not unusual as research may uncover new ideas.

Crediting Your Sources

When you note ideas, you must give credit to the author for borrowing his or her ideas. If you do not, you are plagiarizing. Plagiarism means to pass off ideas or words from another as your own. Plagiarism is not only considered cheating, but is also illegal.

Material is acknowledged in order to:

- a. give credit to the source.
- b. enable the reader to check such things as statistics.
- c. enable the reader to find additional material on a subject.
- d. give authority to the paper.

1. You must acknowledge the source whether the material is quoted directly or is paraphrased.

- a. Paraphrase means to condense the information and put it into your own words.
- b. You must use quotations any time you quote more than five of another person's exact words in consecutive order.
- c. General information that is common knowledge is not credited.

2. You use an ellipsis (three dots) if you cut out words from a quote.

Direct quote from source: "Smith's report was highly controversial and took five years to complete."

Use of ellipsis to shorten quote:

- a. "Smith's report was highly controversial. . . ."
In this example, the ellipsis (. . .) is followed by a period. Periods are always placed inside quotation marks.

- b. "Smith's report . . . took five years to complete."

3. If you insert your own words into a quotation, you must do so with brackets [your words], not parentheses.

Direct quote from source: "The Chapare region produces much of the 32,000 tons of cocaine annually."

Use of own words to help develop your point:

"The Chapare region [which is about the size of New Jersey] produces much of the 32,000 tons of cocaine annually."