

YORKWAC Infobase

Paraphrasing Evidence from Sources

Paraphrasing is one of the ways you can incorporate evidence from a source into your research paper or other writing assignment.

To *paraphrase* means to restate the evidence point-by-point *in your own words*.

When to paraphrase:

Paraphrasing is useful when the information in the original source is important for your argument, but the exact wording is not important.

How to paraphrase:

1. Use a signal phrase to introduce the source of the evidence.
2. Restate the evidence point-by-point *in your own words*.
3. Use a parenthetical citation to link the paraphrased text to a specific entry in your reference list.

Example:

Below is a paragraph from *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, found in a 1998 edition published in London by ElecBooks.

Original text—exactly as it appears in the source, word for word:

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

Paraphrase—the original text restated point-by-point in your own words:

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels claim that previous periods had complex systems of social stratification. Ancient Rome had patrician and plebian orders, as well as slaves. Medieval Europe had feudal lords, vassals, skilled laborers, and serfs. There were further divisions within each of these groups; for example, in feudal Europe, skilled laborers included guild-masters, journeymen, and apprentices (1998, p. 9).

In addition to paraphrasing, you can also incorporate evidence by *summarizing* or by using *direct quotes*.

For more information about how to incorporate evidence from sources, consult the following Infosheets in the **YORKWAC Infobase**:

Infosheet #17, Ways to Use Sources or Incorporate Evidence

Infosheet #18, Quoting Evidence from Sources

Infosheet #20, Summarizing Evidence from Sources