Quotations, Paraphrases, and Summaries
By Dr. Karen Petit

When a writer uses words or ideas from other people's books, articles, websites, speeches, or other "texts," the words or ideas are conveyed to readers through the use of a quotation, a paraphrase, or a summary. To avoid plagiarism, a writer also must use correct documentation and show readers every instance of the use of someone else's words or ideas.
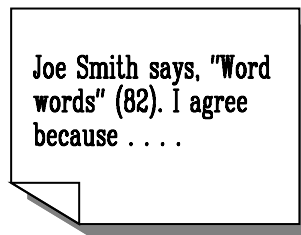
A writer often will use his/her own ideas to lead into and/or comment on a quotation, a paraphrase, or a summary. This commentary--which may take the form of a thesis, a topic sentence, analysis, evaluation, or interpretation--should be clearly distinguished from the information attained from other authors and conveyed in the quotations, paraphrases, and summaries.

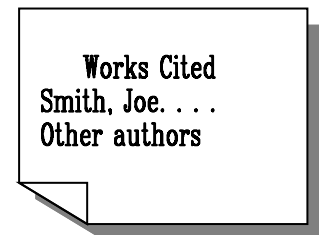📖 **A quotation is an exact version of an original source's words:**

Original source (Joe Smith's book):

Word word
words words

82

Quotation in Janet's paper:

Joe Smith says, "Word words" (82). I agree because . . . .

End of Janet's paper:

Works Cited
Smith, Joe. . . .
Other authors
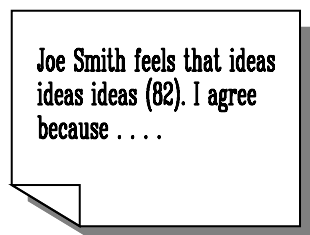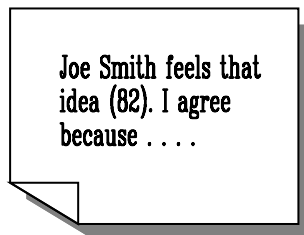
When an original source's words are used in a paper, the words must be placed in quotation marks, and correct documentation must be used. If the MLA system (one example of a documentation system) is used to document sources, then the author's name and the page number need to be in the body of the writer's paper, and a Works Cited page must be at the end of the paper. The Works Cited page lists all of the bibliographic information, including the author's name, the work's title, the publication information, and online-source information. All of the authors and "works" that are "cited" in the body of a paper need to be listed on the "Works Cited" page.

📖 **A paraphrase is a rephrasing of an original source's words, and a summary is a more concise rephrasing of an original source's words:**
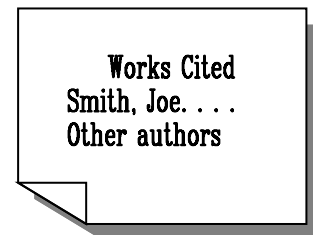
Paraphrase in Janet's paper:

Joe Smith feels that ideas ideas ideas (82). I agree because . . . .

Summary in Janet's paper:

Joe Smith feels that idea (82). I agree because . . . .

End of Janet's paper:

Works Cited
Smith, Joe. . . .
Other authors

Even when Joe Smith's exact words are not used in Janet's paper, to avoid plagiarism, Janet must use correct documentation to show her readers every instance of her use of someone else's ideas.