

# YORKWAC Infobase

## Summarizing Evidence from Sources

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

To *summarize* means to state the main ideas of a passage briefly *in your own words*.

### When to summarize:

Summarizing is useful when you want to condense or simplify the evidence or omit details that are extraneous to your argument.

### How to summarize:

1. Use a signal phrase to introduce the source of the evidence.
2. State the main ideas of the passage briefly *in your own words*.
3. Use a parenthetical citation to link the summarized 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.

Summary—the main points of the original text in your own words:

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels claim that previous periods had complex systems of social stratification, with a relatively small number of major groups and further divisions within each class (1998, p. 9).

In addition to summarizing, you can also incorporate evidence by *paraphrasing* 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 #19, Paraphrasing Evidence from Sources