MLA In-text Citations

When integrating sources into a paper, remember that it's *your* ideas your instructors want to read. ***So when using a source, stay focused on what you are trying to say, and how that source relates to it.*** And if the information is not your own idea, or is not common knowledge, you need to cite a source.

As a rule of thumb, don't use a quote when you could use a paraphrase or summary.
Your words & ideas > Summary > Paraphrase > Quotation.

What if I summarize a whole article or book?

- Yep, this requires a citation. Even if you are summing up a whole book or article in a sentence or two, ultimately you are using someone else's knowledge and ideas. Put your citation at the end of the summary, and if you're summarizing the whole article or book, a page number isn't needed.

Example (MLA format):

Summary with in-text citation:

Poverty is as toxic to children as the lead in the water in Flint, Michigan and towns like it across the United States (Hanna-Attisha).

Works Cited Citation:

Hanna-Attisha, Mona. "Flint Kids: Tragic, Resilient, and Exemplary." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 107, no. 5, May 2017, pp. 651-652. EBSCO*host*, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2017.303732.

What if I paraphrase?

- Even if you summarize or rephrase someone else's work, you still need to cite it. It isn't about the words, it's about the idea. And Paraphrase ≠ replace each word using a thesaurus.

Example (MLA format):

Original:

"Much research has been published on sacred space in the medieval world, the majority of this scholarship focuses on historical spatial practices, or on ways in which medieval concepts of space were actualized in social reality" (Bailey 495).

Paraphrase:

In fact, much of the literature on medieval churches have concentrated on the historical role these sites played in the day to day social lives of women and men (Bailey 495).

Works Cited Citation:

Bailey, Anne E. "Modern and Medieval Approaches to Pilgrimage, Gender and Sacred Space." *History & Anthropology*, vol. 24, no. 4, Dec. 2013, pp. 493-512. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/02757206.2013.813850.

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What if I use a direct quote?

- Definitely. Put quotation marks around the borrowed text AND put a citation at the end of the quote.

Example (MLA format):

Original:

> The poet William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland on 7 April 1770. Much of his poetry was inspired by the dramatic landscapes of the Lake District, and his work did much to alter public perceptions of that part of England.

Quote:

William Wordsworth's upbringing and home impacted his writing, and "much of his poetry was inspired by the dramatic landscapes of the Lake District, and his work did much to alter public perceptions of that part of England" (British Library).

Works Cited Citation:

British Library. *William Wordsworth*, British Library, https://www.bl.uk/people/william-wordsworth. Accessed 6 Dec. 2017.

What if I use an oral interview?

- Yes. Using an interview is just like any other source, following the rules of thumb for summary, paraphrase, and quotation.

Example (MLA):

Summary:

Even a veteran college instructor found that her students were frequently unable to afford the required textbooks for their classes (Doe).

Paraphrase:

The instructor found one student even had to drop a class because the cost of textbooks made her unable to afford a full course load (Doe).

Quotation:

The frustration is evident among instructors and students, as one instructor noted "the cost of textbooks is becoming an impediment to learning for my students" (Doe).

Works Cited Citation:

Doe, Jane. Personal Interview. 22 March 2018.

What if it's common knowledge?

- There is some information you can assume your readers know without citing it (for example, the location of the White House). **To decide what is common knowledge, it's important to think about the audience your paper is aimed at.** Think about who you're writing for and whether an idea will be common knowledge to them.

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