Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Quoting

Definitions
Paraphrase = to capture the precise meaning of a text in your own words
Summarize = to put the main idea(s) of a text in your own words
Quote = to copy the exact words from another text

Goals of each
To understand what you are reading so that you can respond to, build on, and challenge it
To accurately represent the ideas of other sources

Characteristics of effective paraphrases, summaries, and quotes
Paraphrase
Approximately same length as the original
Retains details from the original
Translates the meaning of the original into your own words
Cites source of the original

Summary
Shorter than the original
Captures the main idea of the original; does not include details
Condenses the meaning of the original into your own words
Cites source of the original

Quote
Same as the original
Reproduces all ideas from the original
Uses the exact words from the original
Cites source of the original

When to paraphrase, summarize, and quote
Paraphrase
When you want to capture information in detail
When you want to record an idea completely but the language of the original does not need to be preserved

Summary
When you want to capture the main idea
When you do not need to attend to the details of the original but want to record the primary point(s)

Quote
When you want to use the precise words of another source
When the language of the original source is particularly eloquent or striking or uses specialized vocabulary
How to paraphrase, summarize, and quote

Paraphrase
- Rephrase the original passage, replacing all key words with synonyms.
- Change sentence structure as necessary.
- Check that you keep all important details.
- Paraphrase your paraphrase. Do this a total of 3 times (i.e., paraphrase x 3).

Summarize
- Determine which of the ideas from the text you are reading are most significant. For an entire article this might be the author’s thesis and 2-3 points of support. For a paragraph this might be the main point and 1-2 pieces of evidence that support it.
- Condense these ideas into your own words.
- Explain how these ideas fit together. (Do not just list points; connect them.)

Quote
- Select the passage you wish to use. Smaller sections are preferable.
- Copy the source’s words exactly.
- Use brackets to make necessary tense changes or to add explanatory additions.
- Use [sic] to indicate that a mistake in a quote is from the original source and not you.
- Indent two tabs quotes longer than four lines. Be careful not to rely on too many long quotes.