

Paraphrasing vs Summarizing

Summary: Brief and broad account of the main points of a source text.

Paraphrase: Specific, detailed account of source information.

	Paraphrasing	Summarizing	
In your own words	√	√	Make sure this is truly written in your own voice. Don't put the source in your own words line-by-line from the original text.
Shorter than original source	√	√	Summaries are usually shorter than paraphrases.
Details / Specific info	√		Paraphrasing is more commonly used in academic writing than summarizing, because academic writing usually gets specific.
Main ideas / Broad points		√	

Remember: Whenever you are referencing a source, you are doing so for your own purposes. As in, your own paper has its own point—you aren't duplicating the main point of the source text. So, your paraphrase or summary should be written with your own paper's main point in mind.

That will help you choose:

- Whether to paraphrase or summarize
- Which information to emphasize
- Whether some information can be left out
- How to organize the information

It all goes back to your paper's main focus!