

The Credibility Toolbox: Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

Materials Needed:

- A short, recent Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed) printed or digital (e.g., a current events piece focusing on technology, education, or environment).
- Highlighters or colored pencils (Red, Blue, Green), or digital annotation tools.
- Notebook or analysis worksheet.

Learning Objectives (SWBAT):

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Define and differentiate between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing as methods of presenting evidence.
2. Analyze an opinion editorial and correctly identify which method (quote, paraphrase, or summary) the author used for specific pieces of evidence.
3. Explain the author's strategic purpose for choosing one method over another in building their argument.

Introduction: The Reporter's Challenge (Hook & Context)

Hook:

Imagine you are trying to convince your parents to let you stay up late because "all the other kids do it." You need proof! Would you read them the actual text message from your friend's parent, explain the general consensus in your own words, or just say, "Mom, research shows teens need less sleep now"?

Opinion editorials (Op-Eds) are just like that—they are trying to convince us of something. To be convincing, authors use evidence from experts. Today, we're going to become detectives and figure out exactly how authors sneak that evidence into their arguments.

Success Criteria:

You know you're successful when you can color-code the evidence in the Op-Ed and clearly explain why the author used the "Red" (Quote) method instead of the "Blue" (Paraphrase) method at least three times.

Part 1: Defining the Toolbox (I Do)

We have three main tools authors use when citing someone else's information. We will assign them colors for easy spotting:

I Do: Modeling the Definitions

1. Quoting (Use RED Highlighter):

- **What it is:** Taking the source's exact words, word-for-word.
- **How to spot it:** Always uses quotation marks (" ").
- **Why an author uses it:** When the original wording is so strong, precise, or unique that changing it would weaken the impact. It's used for high credibility or highly controversial statements.

2. Paraphrasing (Use BLUE Highlighter):

- **What it is:** Restating the source's idea or information using completely your own words and sentence structure. It's usually about the same length as the original material.
- **How to spot it:** No quotation marks, but the author usually names the source (e.g., "According to Dr. Smith...")
- **Why an author uses it:** When the idea is important, but the original wording is too technical, long, or confusing. It keeps the flow of the author's own writing smooth.

3. Summarizing (Use GREEN Highlighter):

- **What it is:** Condensing a long passage, study, or entire report into one or two brief sentences that capture only the main idea.
- **How to spot it:** Very short statement followed by the source (e.g., "A recent study by the university showed a decrease in screen time among teens.")
- **Why an author uses it:** When the specific details aren't necessary for the argument, but the general conclusion supports their point.

Part 2: Practice Identification (We Do)

Now let's apply these definitions. Grab your Op-Ed and your highlighters. We are going to read the first two paragraphs together.

We Do: Guided Analysis

1. **Read Aloud:** Read the first two paragraphs of the selected Op-Ed.
2. **Identify Evidence:** Point out the first time the author mentions outside information (data, a study, or another person's opinion).
3. **Analyze the Presentation:** Ask the following questions:
 - Does it have quotation marks? (If yes, it's **RED/Quote**.)
 - If not, is it just one quick sentence about a study, or is it several lines restating a specific idea?
 - (*Teacher/Parent models annotation*): "Ah, in sentence 3, the author says, 'As Dr. Elena Diaz stated, "The risk factors are exponentially rising.'" Because those quotation marks are there, I know this is a direct quote. I will highlight this in **RED**."
 - (*Learner practice*): Locate the next piece of evidence. If it says, "Diaz's team later explained that the escalating danger was directly linked to technological dependence," the student identifies this as a **BLUE/Paraphrase** because it is restating her idea without the exact words.

Formative Assessment Check:

Before moving on, quickly ask: "Why did the author quote Dr. Diaz in that first instance instead of paraphrasing her?" (*Expected answer: The exact phrase "exponentially rising" is very dramatic and precise; the author wanted that exact strong wording.*)

Part 3: Strategic Analysis (You Do)

You will now work independently to finish annotating the rest of the Op-Ed. Remember to think like a detective and figure out **why** the author made the choice they did.

You Do: Independent Evidence Hunt

Instructions:

1. Continue reading the Op-Ed from where we left off.
2. Every time you spot evidence (a reference to a study, an expert, or data), highlight it using the color code: **RED (Quote)**, **BLUE (Paraphrase)**, or **GREEN (Summary)**.
3. After you finish reading, choose two examples of **RED** evidence and two examples of **BLUE** evidence. On your worksheet, briefly answer: *"Why did the author use this specific method here?"*

Adaptation & Differentiation:

- **Scaffolding (For learners needing support):** Provide a modified Op-Ed where quotation marks are intentionally bolded to make spotting quotes easier. Focus the analysis only on defining Q, P, and S, skipping the "why" analysis.
- **Extension (For advanced learners):** Analyze a second Op-Ed on the same topic and compare the evidence presentation. Determine which author used evidence most effectively to build credibility.

Conclusion: Review and Application

Closure Activity: The Three-Card Draw

Quickly write down the definition of Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing on three separate index cards (or three sections of your notebook). Pick a card and, without looking at the Op-Ed, try to recall an example of that method from the text we just read.

Recap and Takeaways:

We learned that authors are not just dumping information onto the page; they are making strategic decisions. They choose quoting when precision or impact is key, and they choose paraphrasing or summarizing when they want the information to blend smoothly into their own voice while keeping the argument moving forward.

Summative Assessment:

Submit your annotated Op-Ed and your analysis worksheet answering the following prompt:

Assessment Prompt: Review the evidence you highlighted in the Op-Ed. Which type of evidence presentation (Quote, Paraphrase, or Summary) did the author use the most, and based on the topic, why do you think this was their preferred method?