Incorporating Information into Your Writing

- **Close paraphrases** are the most common form of plagiarism. When taking notes from a research source, students often paraphrase too closely. They may unintentionally mimic the source's structure or language, or simply replace key words or phrases with synonyms. To avoid this problem, you should read a source, close the source, and then take notes – in your own words – from memory. Then double-check your notes with the text for accuracy. This ensures that if you copy sections of your notes into your paper, you won't be taking credit for someone else's words – whether you mean to or not.

- **Use direct quotations sparingly,** as they are most effective when the source is especially clear or expressive. If you use quotations too often, they begin to lose their impact on the reader. The more you summarize and paraphrase the better, since your readers are looking for your take on the information you are citing. If you feel you must use a quotation, but worry that you may be using too many, try weaving part of it into your own sentence while still documenting properly. That way, you can use the author's words for emphasis while still incorporating your own writing style as well.

- When you do choose to weave quotations into your writing, **integrate them as smoothly as possible.** Provide clear signal phrases, and include the author's name. Make sure you vary these phrases, too. See our **Quoting Smoothly** handout for more advice.

- When **quoting more than four typed lines,** set this text off by indenting ten spaces (the same as a double tab) from the left-hand margin, but keep the line spacing consistent with the rest of the paper. Don't change the right margin, and don't use quotations for the offset text. The format for parenthetical citation in this case is to include the page number in parentheses after the final period of the quotation. The following is taken from Professor Gordon Hoestettler's thoughts on choosing a topic for a speech:

  > Only subject matter of substance can be admissible in the speech classroom. Frivolous, shallow topics. . .can serve only to sap and impoverish the minds of students and to debase the study of speech. Such practice. . .makes speech suspect, and properly so, in the academic world. (21)

- If you need to **condense a quotation**, use three periods with spaces between (called an ellipsis) to show where you have deleted a word or phrase. Just make sure that you retain the original meaning of the text and that you maintain proper grammar. Also, note that an ellipsis mark is not necessary either at the beginning or end of a quotation, unless you have removed some words from the end of the last sentence quoted.

- When **inserting your own words** into a quotation, use brackets [ ] rather than parentheses ( ).