

How to quote and paraphrase without plagiarizing

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Read the following excerpts from hypothetical student papers and decide which one(s) best use(s) the original source without resorting to plagiarism. Remember: All direct quotes should be either within quotation marks or clearly set off from the rest of the text as a block quote; paraphrased sections should be substantially different from the original formulation; and all sources must be mentioned within the text.

Excerpt from original source

Ngai, Mae M, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924". *Journal of American History*, 86 June (1999), Nr. 1, 67–92. Page 73.

Thus while the national origins quota system was intended principally to restrict immigration from the nations of southern and eastern Europe and used the notion of national origins to justify discrimination from those nations, it did more than divide Europe. It also divided Europe from the non-European world. It defined the world formally by country and nationality but also by race, distinguishing between white persons from white countries and so-called colored races, whose members were imagined as having no countries of origin. This cross-cutting taxonomy was starkly presented in a table prepared by John Trevor, an advocate of immigration restriction and the chief lobbyist for a coalition of patriotic societies, on the national origins of the American people in 1924, which listed under the column "Country of Origin" fifty-three countries (from Australia to Yugoslavia) and five "colored races" (black, mulatto, Chinese, Japanese and Indian).

Excerpts from hypothetical student papers

Sample 1

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, immigration became a topic of fervent if intermittent debate. The debate focused mainly on European immigrants: in the 1890s, much of the immigration flow from Europe had shifted from northern and western European countries to southern and eastern European ones. Many Americans expressed fears that immigrants from southern and eastern Europe would not assimilate, and groups like the American Protective Association began to advocate restriction. Over the years, the tone of the restrictionists became ever more feverish, and many even claimed that southern and eastern Europeans were racially inferior. The restrictionist drive culminated in the Immigration Restriction Acts of 1921 and 1924, which set up nationality quotas that favored northern and western Europe (SomeAuthor pp. 22–23).

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origins to justify discrimination from those nations, it did more than divide Europe. It also divided Europe from the non-European world. It defined the world formally by country and nationality but also by race, distinguishing between white persons from white countries and so-called colored races, whose members were imagined as having no countries of origin.

Sample 2

In 1924, the Congress passed the Immigration Restriction Act, which set up nationality quotas for all European countries, and calculated those quotas in a way that drastically reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe (SomeAuthor pp. 82–84). Most historians have focused on the Quota Acts' effect on European immigrants and the fact that the act discriminated against southern and eastern Europeans. However, at least as important a consequence was that the Acts formally divided Europe from the rest of the world, white from non-white. Restrictionists classified only white persons by country; all others were defined by their race. For instance, the restrictionist John Trevor prepared a table on the national origins of Americans that characterized e.g. Chinese, Japanese and Indian as races rather than countries of origin.

Few Americans at the time (including opponents of immigration restriction) saw the contradiction in classifying some people by race and others by country ...

Sample 3

In 1924, the Congress passed the Immigration Restriction Act, which set up nationality quotas for all European countries, and calculated those quotas in a way that drastically reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The Act also completely forbade immigration from Japan. The act was the culmination of decades of efforts by advocates of

immigration restriction, many of whom considered southern and eastern Europeans culturally and even racially inferior to "Nordics" (SomeAuthor pp. 82–85).

Most historians have focused on the Quota Acts' effect on European immigrants. However, as Mae Ngai points out, the Acts "also divided Europe from the non-European world" (Ngai p. 73). The assumption of the restrictionists was that only white persons should be classified per country; all others were defined by their race. Thus, for example, a national origins table by the restrictionist John Trevor listed not only countries but "five 'colored races' (black, mulatto, Chinese, Japanese, and Indian)" (Ngai p. 73).

Sample 4

The national origins quota system, which was instituted in the Immigration Act of 1924, was intended principally to restrict immigration from the nations of southern and eastern Europe. However, it also dealt with the non-European world. It defined the world formally by country and nationality but also by race, making a distinction between white persons from white countries and so-called colored races, whose members were thought of as having no countries of origin. This is clear in a table of the national origins of the American people in 1924 prepared by John Trevor, an advocate of immigration restriction. The table listed under the column "Country of Origin" fifty-three countries and five "colored races" (Ngai, p. 73).

So what's the answer?

Sample 3 is the correct, non-plagiarized version. All the information is attributed properly, direct quotes are within quotation marks, and the non-quoted portions of the text are in the author's own words, not those of Mae Ngai. All the other samples have problems.

Sample 1 is a case of all-out plagiarism: the author simply lifts text directly out of Mae Ngai's article without attribution or any indication that this is a quote.

Sample 2 has no attribution to Ngai—here, however, the paraphrasing is fine. That is, the author has not too closely followed the phrasing in the original but has put the information

in his/her own words. This sample could be turned into a proper, non-plagiarized one simply by adding a citation at the end of the first paragraph.

Sample 4 is a case of paraphrasing that isn't really paraphrasing but a masked quotation. Long stretches of the text in this sample are lifted directly from Ngai's article, and the changes the author has made are insubstantial (for instance, using "making a distinction" instead of the original's "distinguishing" in the middle of the paragraph). If you simply cannot think of a different way of expressing the information than the one used by the source you are citing, it is much more honest to quote directly and indicate the quotation with quotation marks.