

Note Cards

Once you've located an adequate amount of information on your topic, you are ready to sort through and isolate important information. You will need to locate at least 50 pieces of information that you believe you will use in your research paper. Your essay will rely on paraphrases because readers don't want to read strings of quotes – they want to read your interpretation of the material you read. **Note:** the maximum number of cards allowed per source is 15.

HOW TO CREATE NOTE CARDS

FRONT SIDE

1. Give each card a heading. The heading is a title used to identify the information on the card.
2. Provide the source card # from which the information came in the upper right corner.
3. Copy the direct quotation/piece of information exactly as it appears in the source, including punctuation. Add quotations around the quote.
4. Provide the page # the quote came from. Give page numbers for print sources only, including PDF files (non-Internet sources); most Internet sources don't print with the page numbering as it appears in the original print source.
5. Include only one quote/piece of information per note card.
6. Put the speaker's name and credentials in the lower right corner. The speaker may not be the author.
7. Include your initials somewhere on the card.

BACK SIDE

1. Begin the paraphrase with an attributive phrase if the information is not from the author. Include the name of the person you are quoting (and his/her credentials) or organization responsible for the information. Read your source carefully – don't assume the author of the source is the person you are quoting.
2. If the quote is a proven fact, an attributive phrase isn't necessary, but a parenthetical citation is still required.
3. Include dates for facts, statistics, or studies.
4. If you want to use the direct quote as it appears on the front side of your card, still set up the direct quote with an attributive phrase.
5. Paraphrase the information from the front side. Retain the original ideas presented, but use different sentence structure and synonyms.
6. Parenthetical citations must be used (refer to MLA guidelines).

SAMPLE NOTE CARD

Front Side

Source Card 1
Topic: Psychological Reasons
“The plagiarist compares most to the kleptomaniac, both in his evident wish to be detected and in the circumstance that what is stolen may not be needed.”
Page 125
Peter Shaw Author

Back Side

Paraphrase
The plagiarist, according to author Peter Shaw, is similar to a kleptomaniac for two reasons. The first is that the plagiarist or kleptomaniac apparently wants to be detected. Secondly, the stolen material may not even be needed (125).

Note cards are important for several reasons. First, it is easier to sift through note cards looking for information you already know is important rather than flip through endless pages of books and printed/copied sources. Secondly, before you begin writing the paper, you will take your note cards and sort them into the order in which your topics appear. This way, you will be organized and you will know where each quote fits into your paper.