Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

What are the differences among quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing?

**Quotations** must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author. Quoting should be done sparingly.

**Paraphrasing** involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly. It is necessary to attribute paraphrased passages to the original source.

**Summarizing** involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

**After a thorough reading:**
- Consider any words, phrases, or brief passages that you believe should be quoted directly.
- Paraphrase important supporting points that come up in the essay.
- Summarize in your own words what the single main idea of the essay is.

**Writing a Summary in Three Steps**

**Step 1:** Read the entire text and take notes on the sentences, lines, and ideas that seem most important.

**Step 2:** Consider the purpose of your summary to decide which aspects of the article are most important. This does not mean ignore the parts that disagree with you. Depending on the aim of your paper, you might want to highlight different aspects.

**Step 3:** Find a way to combine these ideas in a way that is easy to read (i.e.: not just a collection of randomly presented factoids) and remains true to the ideas presented in the article.