

Guide for Using Quotations

1. Always integrate quotations into your text

You should never "drop" a quotation into your work without properly introducing it or integrating it into your sentences. The quotation should never be a grammatically independent sentence inside your text. You have three options for integrating quotations:

Introduce the quotation with a formal statement or independent clause that ends with a colon

Frank Kaufen stresses this important point about using **quotes**: "You always want to set quotes up and never have them sitting on their own in a text."

Introduce the quotations with a signal phrase followed by a comma or signal verb followed by *that*

--According to Peter **Elbow**,
--As John Bath **says**,

--The commentator suggests **that**
--Williams confirms this idea when he **argues**,

Integrate the quotation fully into your sentences. The quotation and your words must add up to a complete sentence.

We know the boy has learned a painful lesson when he says that his eyes "burned with anguish and anger" (Joyce 481).

Typically, integrating quotations means setting them up with either a sentence or phrase ending with a comma or colon.

2. Always reference your quotations (or document your sources)

After you use a quotation, you must provide a parenthetical citation or footnote that points your reader to the source of the quotation.

Example:

According to the latest research, "The last dinosaurs were **birds**" (Spunk 45).
--MLA Style

Notice where the period goes when including a parenthetical citation: ... **birds**" (Spunk 45).
--The period goes at the end of the sentence--after the parenthetical citation.



3. Quote exactly; Signal any changes you make

You must quote exactly--the words you put into your paper should exactly match the words found in the original source. If you do cut or add words, you must signal to the reader that you have altered the original text.

Signal a cut in the original text with an ellipsis ...

According to Franklin, "The National Parks have been left without adequate funding due to recent budget **cuts, [...]** and political pressure."

Signal any text you add by putting that text in brackets []

Franklin further adds, "It **[Yosemite]** is the most neglected park."

4. Double indent longer quotes

When using a long quotation that takes up four or more lines in your text, indent the quotation 1" from the left margin (equivalent to a double paragraph indention). These indentions are sometimes called "[block quotes.](#)"

Example:

It is in the latter parts of the play that we see a change come over Hamlet. In fact, we might pin point the change to have occurred while he was at sea. In this account told by Hamlet to Horatio after he has returned from his voyage, we see the evidence of this sea-change:

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep.
...let us know
Our discretion sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall, and that should learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will. (V,ii,4-5,7-11)

Hamlet finally is moved into some indiscretion-- into some action. It is at sea that Hamlet accepts his fate to act, though, typical of Hamlet, this action is indirect since he causes the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and not Claudius.

The indention (two TABS in a word processor) signals that the text is a quotation, so no quotation marks are needed.



USING QUOTATIONS FOR MEANING AND EVIDENCE

BEFORE THE QUOTATION

1. Give the context of the quotation (where appropriate). Who said it? Where did it come from and when?
2. Prepare the reader for the quote by telling what the quotation will be demonstrating or proving.

From example above:

In this account told by Hamlet to Horatio after he has returned from his voyage, we see the evidence of this sea-change: *then comes the quotation*

AFTER THE QUOTATION

1. Make sure the significance of the quotation is clear in relation to the main idea of the paragraph and the essay. (See the example above for the long quote as an example of software.)

From example above:

Hamlet finally is moved into some indiscretion-- into some action.

Don't trust the quotation to speak for itself. You must tell the reader what it means and what it proves in relation to your topic.

See also [The Sandwich Principle for Using Quotes](#) | See examples of "sandwiching quotes" properly in "[The Art of Integrating and Setting Up Quotes](#)"

