

Integrating Quotations

"By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

One of our great American authors, Emerson recognized the usefulness and importance of quoting. Likewise, as a student writer, one of the best ways to strengthen your essays and research papers is to use quotations from reliable sources. Quoting means citing the exact words of another writer. By quoting other writers, you lend credibility and support to your own ideas. Study this handout and learn the appropriate times and ways to integrate quotations into your writing.

When to Use Quotations

- IF you simply plug in a quotation because you think it's about time you used one, or
- IF you are aiming for a certain number of citations in your paper, or
- IF your paper is one long string of quotations interspersed with your brief comments,
- THEN you are probably misusing quotations.

Think of the quotation as a rare gem that loses its value if found in abundance.

- 1) Use quotations to serve as examples of your main points and observations.
Remember that a quotation by itself has little significance. It needs your commentary to provide context and meaning. In general, your commentary on anything you quote should be longer than the quotation itself.
- 2) Choose only important material that effectively supports your point. Choose quotations that provide significant information about character or the author's main idea rather than quotations that simply advance the plot.
- 3) Select quotations carefully and purposefully for a research paper or literary analysis:
 - to illustrate or explain an opinion or idea
 - to assert a fact
 - to provide authority for an assertion you have made
 - to provide a focal point
 - to show many opinions

How to Integrate Quotations

1. Sprinkle your discussion with key phrases and terms, which should be surrounded with quotations marks.

Wilfred Owens says that the only prayer said for those who die in battle is the "rapid rattle of guns which spatter out their hasty orisons" (line 7).

When quoting poetry, just give the line numbers in parentheses after you have established that the numerals in the parentheses refer to lines rather than to pages.

2. Use an indirect statement with "that."

Margaret Mead feels that "the use of marriage contracts may reduce the divorce rate" (9).

3. Blend your lead-in and quotation.

Knight views the symbolism in Jones' play as a "creation and destruction pattern" (164).

4. Use a complete sentence lead-in. Follow with a colon and two spaces before the quotation.

Edith Hamilton describes Hera perfectly: "She was the protector of marriage, and married women were her particular care" (223).

Again the main character hears the words spoken by his grandfather: "I never told you, but our life is a war" (154).

5. Use an introductory phrase or clause.

According to Clyde Jones, "Frost revives the themes of the early nineteenth-century romantics" (112).

As the grandfather explained, "...life is a war" (154).

6. Split the quotation.

"A fully articulated pastoral idea of America," claims Leo Marx, "did not emerge until the end of the eighteenth century" (89).

7. Use the author's name and/or his authority to introduce quotations from secondary sources.

Frank Kermode, a prominent critic, claims that Hamlet "is a delaying revenger" (1138).