

# Quotations

## Use quotations like salt

Most of your paper will consist of summaries and paraphrases of what you have read. (This demonstrates you have actually read and understood your sources.) Limit your quotations to situations where the original author's words are particularly memorable or well-expressed, or when the author writes something complex or controversial that would be difficult to paraphrase.

## Weave quotations into your text

There are many effective ways to use quotations in your paper. Don't just dump them in randomly like raisins in a bagel!

Put the quotation in context. Formal statements and independent clauses are typically followed by a colon:

Lester Folsom (92) has no patience with writers who quote too much: "You end up with word salad—too many things thrown in that don't go together."

Quotations are often preceded by signal phrases or signal verbs:

As Huck says,

Smith argues that

The English language is unusually rich in synonyms and near-synonyms. Practice using less common words in your signal phrases. Instead of *Smith writes* or *Jones says*, consider:

acknowledges	endorses	emphasizes	confesses	claims	asserts	implies
compares	observes	admits	illustrates	proposes	infers	suggests
agrees	denies	confirms	refutes	rejects	disputes	

According to Lester Folsom,  
The narrator suggests that  
Although Taylor (27-8) claims that [blah blah], Friedkin disagrees: [blah blah] (94).

It can sometimes be effective to partially quote, using the most memorable words or phrases:

Lincoln pledged to reconcile the war-torn nation "with malice towards none, and charity for all" (Lincoln 481).

If you partially quote, make sure the resulting sentence is complete and grammatical.

**NOT:** Lincoln pledged the war-torn nation "with malice towards none, and charity for all" (Lincoln 481).

## Parenthetical Citation

The Works Cited list at the end of your paper contains complete bibliographic information about your sources. In the text of the paper, you refer the reader to the Works Cited list with brief *parenthetical citations*.

After a quotation or paraphrase, put the author's last name in parentheses, followed by the page number(s) where you got the information. Commas, periods, and other punctuation come after the close parenthesis.

"The Internet made a lot of things very simple. Bibliographies aren't among them" (Kronholz A1).

If you included the author's name when introducing the quotation or paraphrase, you don't need to repeat it. Simply provide the appropriate page number(s) in parentheses. Either of the following methods is acceptable:

According to Kronholz, "The Internet made a lot of things very simple. Bibliographies aren't among them" (A1).

According to Kronholz (A1), "The Internet made a lot of things very simple. Bibliographies aren't among them."

## Block Quotations:

On rare occasions, you may wish to include a lengthy quotation (more than four lines). If you do, indent the block about an inch from the margin, and don't surround the block with quotation marks:

In a related article, Elliott J. Gorn writes

Ambrose has not exactly hidden his reliance on others' work. His footnotes generally cite the authors from whom he borrows, going so far as to praise their books. Still, a single footnote for several paragraphs of closely cribbed work is thin attribution by historians' standards, and not using quotation marks around others' words is a cardinal sin [...]. Not only does his practice violate universally accepted canons of historical scholarship, but most professors would routinely fail any student who so casually adopted it. (B10)

The text of your paper would then continue like this, with normal margins on the left.

In block quotations, the parenthetical reference follows whatever punctuation ends the quotation.

## Modifying Quotations:

Normally you quote using the author's exact words. There are several occasions when you might wish to modify the quotation.

1. If the quotation is very long, you can shorten it by replacing unnecessary words or phrases with three periods, known as ellipsis: ... Since the author you are quoting can also use ellipses, some authorities recommend placing square brackets around any ellipses you introduce: [...] to make it clear that you have eliminated something. See the example above, under "Block Quotations."

2. Sometimes when you quote, you must insert a word or two to clarify the quotation or to make it grammatically correct:

Nurse Rosanna recalls that "while she [Dolan's sister] spoke she reached for the silver locket around her neck" (Rimini 384).

3. **Rare:** If you want to emphasize particular words or phrases within a quotation, use italics and then in square brackets write [emphasis added]. For example,

Gorn doesn't pull any punches with regard to Ambrose's mistakes:

Not only does his [Ambrose's] practice violate universally accepted canons of historical scholarship, but *most professors would routinely fail any student who so casually adopted it.* [emphasis added] (B10)

You would not put [emphasis added] if the original text was italicized. In fact, if the source you are quoting does include bold or italic text, it is best to put [emphasis in the original] to make sure the reader knows you didn't add emphasis.

In general, it is best to let the source speak for itself.

## Quotations Within Quotations:

Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.

George Carlin sarcastically points out, "a 'compassionate conservative' apparently believes any church that wants to open a soup kitchen should be allowed to" (B8).

## Citing Indirect Sources:

Sometimes the article you are reading quotes another article. If you quote someone else's quotation, it should be noted in your parenthetical citation:

In his seminal 1893 essay, Frederick Jackson Turner seemed almost melancholy when he observed, "The closing of the frontier signaled the end of an era in American history" (qtd. in Worster, Limerick, and Hartshorn 549)

The Works Cited entry corresponding to this last example might look like this:

Worster, Donald L., Patricia Limerick, and Rebecca Hartshorn. *The West of the Imagination*. Palo Alto: Stanford UP, 1974. Print.

Similarly, if the source you are using cites someone else (but doesn't directly quote them), you could indicate your source is not the original source of the information:

Government census projections suggest that Caucasians will constitute a minority of the U.S. population by the year 2059 (cited in Wallingford 119)

# Paraphrasing

Anyone can quote. To demonstrate that you have actually read and understood your sources, you most often *paraphrase* them. Paraphrasing is a kind of rewriting, but it is more than just changing a few words here and there. In addition to rewriting the information in your own words, you also summarize and condense.

Here's a paragraph from a newspaper article about a summertime version of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):

While a small number of people suffer a severe case, the findings may have broader implications for anyone with warm-weather grouchiness. Only about 1% of Americans experience serious summer SAD, but many more people experience limited symptoms, ranging from heat-induced irritability to increased agitation. (By contrast, about 5% of Americans experience full-blown winter SAD.) Like regular depression, the syndrome appears to be far more common in women. Standard treatments include antidepressants like Zoloft and Celexa, though some doctors prescribe more unusual remedies, such as ice-cold baths and trips to air-conditioned movie theaters.

Spencer, Jane. "When Blue Skies Bring on the Blues—Research Shows Why Some Despair at Sunny Days and Relish Gloom of Winter." *Wall Street Journal* 22 May 2003: D1. Print.

Here is one possible paraphrase:

Summer SAD, which involves irritability and increased agitation, affects only about 1% of Americans (versus the 5% of Americans who have winter SAD). Like regular depression, summer and winter SAD are more common in women. SAD can be treated with antidepressants (Zoloft, Celexa) or with strange remedies like cold baths and frequent visits to air-conditioned movie theaters. (Spencer D1).

Is there a problem here? Strictly speaking, yes. For one, it's not paraphrased enough. The information in the original is repeated in virtually the same order, and certain key phrases are repeated with very little change. And while the paraphrase is shorter, it could be tightened up.

Summer SAD, like its winter counterpart, affects relatively few Americans (1% and 5%, respectively, mostly women). Hot weather makes sufferers cranky and agitated. Cold showers and air conditioning can help mild cases, antidepressants the more severe ones (Spencer D1).

If you really want to summarize, you can go for the one-sentence version:

The rare summer form of SAD, where hot weather makes people grouchy, can be treated with cooler temperatures or antidepressants (Spencer D1).

The original article has 949 words in fifteen paragraphs. A good researcher should be able to paraphrase the entire article down to one or two paragraphs.

Many students find paraphrasing difficult. The important thing to remember is *you can't paraphrase what you don't understand*. Read your sources carefully. Make sure you know what each word means. Highlight the truly important facts. Then try saying what you've learned from the article in your own words. It gets easier with practice!