



Figure 1 Logos for the Academic Resource Center and The Writing Center

## INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS

When writing an essay, professors will often suggest or require that their students use quotations to help argue or prove their point. Adding quotations to an essay can enhance and add credibility to our writing, but there are certain techniques we can use to make sure that we are integrating quotations properly. In the following handout, we will discuss the proper methods for *integrating quotations* into your essay in order to ensure that they blend well with your own words and accurately enhance the content of your essay.



Figure 2 Quote marks image

### What is a quotation?

*The American Heritage College Dictionary* defines the act of quoting as “to repeat or copy the words of (another) . . . with acknowledgment of the source.” A “quotation” is “a passage quoted.”



**NOTE!** Some may be more familiar with the word “quote” versus the word “quotation.” A little-known fact is that the word “quote” is more often used to refer to the *act of quoting*, as it is typically used as a verb, i.e. “To quote a quotation.” The word “quotation” is more formally used to refer to the quote itself. However, in common linguistics, both “quotation” and “quote” are nouns, so they can be used interchangeably.

You will use quotations in your essays by finding literature that relates to your topic; finding sentences, words, or phrases in that literature; and using those sentences in your paper.

### **Why do we need quotations?**

When you are writing an essay, you will need to include quotations to add credibility to your argument or viewpoint. In many cases, it is okay to *paraphrase* your source by stating the information in your own words (keep in mind that you still need to *cite*<sup>1</sup> this information as though it is a quotation). However, there are some cases in which it is better to quote than to paraphrase. It is generally thought that there are two reasons that a quotation might be preferable:

- The original source has phrased the information perfectly.
- The quotation comes from a very credible source.

### **How do I include quotations in my essay?**

There are many different ways to include quotations in an essay. The method you use will depend on your personal writing style and the content of the quotation itself.

1) **Quoting with signal phrase** is when you mention the author and the background information of the author before using the quotation. This is a good method because it lets the reader know that the quotation is from a credible source.

*For example:*

As stated by Phil Oliff, the leading Policy Analyst from the *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, “States are spending \$2,353 or 28 percent less per student on higher education, nationwide, in the current 2013 fiscal year than they did in 2008, when the recession hit.”

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on citing quotations, please refer to page 6 of this handout.

According to Samantha Washington, a Professor of Psychology at Columbia University, “Universities need to take a stand when it comes to rights in education.”

**Below are some of the most common words used to present a quotation using signal phrase:**

Acknowledges	Contends	Observes
Adds	Declares	Points out
Admits	Denies	Reasons
Addresses	Disputes	Refutes
Argues	Emphasizes	Rejects
Asserts	Endorses	Reports
Believes	Grants	Responds
Claims	Illustrates	Suggests
Comments	Implies	Thinks
Compares	Insists	Writes
Confirms	Notes	

2) **Stand-alone quotations** do not necessarily need an introduction to make sense within the context of your essay. A quotation can even take the place of a complete sentence when it stands alone.

*For example:*

Be happy. Figure out your goals. “Find ecstasy in life; the mere sense of living is joy enough” (Emily Dickinson).

Love is incredibly powerful. “Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage” (Lao Tzu).

3) **Directly integrated quotations** can take the place of phrases or words in your sentences. This method is best when you feel as if the wording of a particular quotation is perfect for the context of your sentence.

*For example:*

Malcolm X said that when he picked up a book most of the words “might as well have been in Chinese” as an example of his difficulty with reading.

I find it striking that though “women novelists have probably dominated American literature since the middle of the nineteenth century,” our literary tradition is still incredibly gender specific (Schweickart 201).

### **Can I edit quotations?**

In a direct quotation, always use the **exact words** from the reference and do not change any of the words. However, it is not completely taboo to change the content of a quotation, **as long as you maintain the meaning or tone of the original author**. If you need to change the content of a quotation, use the following proper methods.

- **Brackets:** If you need to change or add a word/phrase, signal to the reader that you have done so by putting the added or edited words in **brackets** ( [ ] ).

*For example:*

William Johnson stated, “Most students agree that **[they]** have trouble studying, but community college students have it tough. They often have to worry about taking care of their families and working full-time as well.”

In this case, “they” was not originally in the reference.

**Ellipses:** If you wish to leave words out of a quotation, you can do that by including an **ellipsis** (...). This shows the reader that you have left out words, phrases, or complete sentences.

*For example:*

William Johnson stated, “Most students agree that **[they]** have trouble studying . . . **[because]** they often have to worry about taking care of their families and working full-time as well.”

As demonstrated above, it is perfectly fine to incorporate brackets and ellipses together when editing a quotation.



**NOTE!** If you are quoting something that already has quotation marks in the original quotation, then change those quotation marks into apostrophes ( ' ' ).

*For example:*

“People are sometimes difficult to handle,” points out Chelsea Smith. “Sometimes they play the **‘villain’** when you are trying to be the **‘hero’** of the story.”

### **How should I format quotations?**

As previously stated, it is not enough to simply drop a quotation into your essay. There is a certain format that you should follow to ensure that your reader understands your quotation and that it does not distract from the flow of your own writing. Each quotation should be integrated using “the quotation sandwich.” First, you have to introduce the quotation. This is your top piece of bread. Second, use the quotation. This is the “good stuff” in the middle of your sandwich. Third, analyze the quotation. This is your bottom piece of bread.

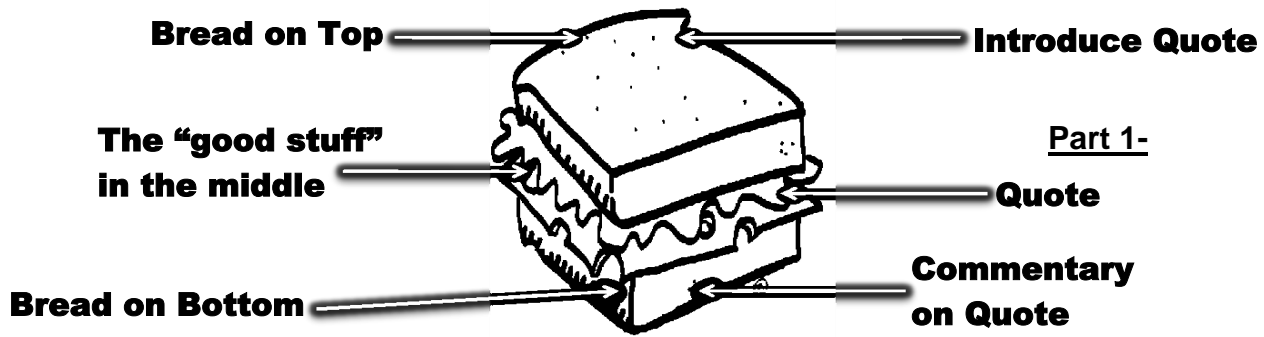


Figure 3 Illustration of the "Quote Sandwich."

### Introduce the Quotation

You should begin this part by introducing the title and author. The next few sentences should give some general background information on the quotation. Never assume that your audience already knows the work that you are referring to even if the audience is your professor. Instead, imagine your audience is anyone on campus who may come across your work. For example, the first part might look something like this:

In his book *The Compadre*, Dr. Torres explores the complexities of relationships. He emphasizes that friendships can be very difficult to keep up. Although intentions may be sincere, life can get in the way. One of the challenges can be communication.

This information is necessary for the reader to fully understand the implications of the quotation. Now, we can actually use a quotation.

### Part 2 – Use the Quotation

When choosing a quotation, pick the one that you feel best represents the idea that you are trying to emphasize. There are probably millions of useful sentences in a book, but only a few will prove your point as accurately as possible. Oftentimes, the most useful quotations are ones that refer to measurable research or other confirmable information.

In his book *The Compadre*, Dr. Torres explores the complexities of relationships. He emphasizes that friendships can be very difficult to keep up. Although intentions may be sincere, life can get in the way. One of the challenges can be communication. This is substantiated by Dr. Torres, when he states that **“Communication can be the end-all-be-all of relationships,” and additionally corroborates, “Modern research points out that approximately 56% of arguments are caused by simple misunderstandings, all of which could have been avoided with proper communication” (167).**

In this case, we have picked a quotation that aligns with the previous sentence’s topic: communication. Our quotation shows that the reference agrees with the ideas stated in the introductory sentences. Additionally, we have included measurable evidence, which makes the supporting point for the argument more credible.

### **Part 3 – Commenting on the Quotation**

It is important to remember that quotations are used to strengthen *your* idea. Therefore, you must include your idea, or commentary, after a quotation. **Try never to leave a quotation on its own without an explanation.**

In his book *The Compadre*, Dr. Torres explores the complexities of relationships. He emphasizes that friendships can be very difficult to keep up. Although intentions may be sincere, life can get in the way. One of the challenges can be communication. This is substantiated by Dr. Torres, when he states that “Communication can be the end-all-be-all of relationships,” and additionally corroborates, “Modern research points out that approximately 56% of arguments are caused by simple misunderstandings, all of which could be avoided with proper communication” (167). **In our everyday lives, we incorrectly use communication without realizing the consequences that this can have on our relationships. With this in mind, we must always strive to improve our communication skills.**

By including this commentary, I have closed my quotation and made my argument clear.

### **How and when do I cite a quotation?**

*Citing* is giving credit to the original source. The format of your citation will depend on two things:

- 1) The type of source you are using (books, online articles, etcetera)
- 2) The essay formatting your professor assigns

For more information on how to cite sources according to different formats and types of resources, please refer to the Writing Center Handouts on **MLA Format** and **APA Format**.

Furthermore, information from sources must always be cited, especially if the information is a direct quotation. Even if the information is *paraphrased* (rephrased in your own words), it is still necessary to cite the author that gave you the information.

Information that is considered common knowledge (i.e. *George Washington was the 1<sup>st</sup> American president, the Tooth Fairy is believed to exchange money for teeth*) does not have to be cited. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between citable information and information that is considered common knowledge—but when in doubt, cite it!



Figure 4 Two friends holding quotation marks



**Exercise:**

Find a quote from an author and use the template below to practice integrating a quote. Remember to follow the “quotation sandwich model” by introducing the quotation with a central topic and following the quotation with your commentary.

***Introduce the Quotation:***

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***Use the Quotation:*** According to

\_\_\_\_\_ , “ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

***Comment on the Quotation:***

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For a more challenging exercise, read the following quotations and think about how to connect it to a personal idea. As illustrated in the previous examples, introduce the quotation with a central topic and follow the quotation with your commentary.

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, a well-known 20<sup>th</sup>-century French philosopher and existentialist, “Everything has been figured out, except how to live.”

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2)

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As stated by Martin Luther King Jr., one of the most prevalent activists in the African-American Civil Rights Movement, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

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*Figure 5 Quotation Marks*

***This handout was based on the following texts:***

*BrainyQuote*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 June 2013.

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

Oliff, Phil. "Recent Deep State Higher Education Cuts May Harm Students and the Economy for Years to Come." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 19 Mar. 2013. Web. 10 June 2013.

"On Integrating Quotes and Paraphrasing." Saint Michael's College, Writing Center, n.d. Web. 10 June 2013.

*Online Writing Lab at Purdue University*. West Lafayette, IN  
< <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/> >

*The American Heritage College Dictionary*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993. Print.

**For further reference, see the following online articles:**

"MLA Formatting Quotations." *Purdue OWL: MLA Formatting and Style Guide*. Purdue OWL, 06 Apr. 2013. Web. 10 June 2013.

<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/03/>>

**All of the above texts are available in The Writing Center.**

**Please visit our website at [www.lavc.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.lavc.edu/writingcenter/) for additional resources and services.**