

How to Use Quotations

“I quote others only the better to express myself.” --Montaigne

The main reason to use a direct quotation: As Montaigne says in the quote above, you should not use a quotation unless you can not say it better yourself—it has interesting or distinctive language. Otherwise, you should paraphrase or summarize sources.

How to integrate a quotation—three parts:

#1—Introduction: (which can come before, in the middle, or after the quote itself)

- ◇ Author’s name
 - Example: Britney Spears says “oops, I did it again” (42).
- ◇ Author’s name and source title
 - Example: Britney Spears, in her book *The Philosophy of Discourse*, explains that “oops, I did it again” (42).
- ◇ Author’s name and credentials
 - Example: Britney Spears, a pop singer and part-time philosopher, notes, “oops, I did it again” (42).
- ◇ Author’s name with your own introductory analysis/summary
 - Example: Britney Spears examines the hidden literary meaning of her latest musical work, observing that “oops, I did it again” (42).
- ◇ This introduction needs to fit grammatically with the quote—it must read like a whole sentence, smoothly, as if there were no quotations there

#2—Quotation:

- ◇ Check your quotation twice for accuracy—it does need to be exact word-for-word
- ◇ Don’t capitalize the first letter of a quotation, “like here.”
- ◇ The end punctuation goes outside of the quotation mark when you have a citation at the end, “like here” (42).
 - However, if there is no in-text citation needed, the end punctuation goes inside the quotations, “like here!”
- ◇ If you need to put in an extra word to clarify meaning out of its context, put your additions in brackets, “like [in this bulleted example] here.”
- ◇ If you need to cut unnecessary words or sentences out of your quote, put an ellipsis in brackets wherever you cut words, “like I am doing [. . .] here.”

#3—Citation:

- ◇ Remember to cite in correct MLA format (check your *SSH*).
- ◇ If there’s an author, cite their last name and the page #, “like here” (Smith 42).
- ◇ If no author (or if you mention the author earlier), just include the page #
- ◇ If no page # (like if it’s an online source), then include the author’s name, or if none, the title, or if already mentioned, then have no in-text citation

A note on block quotations—if your quote is **4 lines or longer** when typed out, you need to make it a block quote. This means to format your quote like the following example:

Here is my sample block quote. It should be indented two times, ten spaces total, and all lines should be flush with each other, unlike a regular paragraph. Don't include quotation marks here, as it is obvious this is a quotation. Single-space all block quotes, to contrast against the double-spacing of the rest of your essay. At the end of the quote, include the in-text citation as usual, but put the citation after the end punctuation, like in this example. (Smith 42)

Don't include more than one block quote per page, and it shouldn't be much longer than the one above—otherwise it looks like an excuse to add fluff to your paper, rather than an actual quote that can help your argument. Ask me if you have questions about the length of quotes to include.

Practice: Use the following quotes correctly in a sentence. Try to vary your introduction styles, referring to the previous page. Refer to your *WARAC* if you need more context for each quote.

1. Spake, page 467: “Healthcare costs for illnesses resulting from obesity now exceed those related to both smoking and problem drinking.”
2. Spake, page 468, using a quote by Arthur Frank: “Saying to an obese person who wants to lose weight, ‘All you have to do is eat less,’ is like saying to a person suffering from asthma, ‘All you have to do is breathe better.’”
(Hint—the in-text will be different to note that this is a quote from Spake, not Spake’s words herself—(qtd. in Spake 468). “qtd.”=quoted)
3. Koplan and Dietz, page 473: “Obesity is epidemic in the United States.”
4. Crister, page 485: “The cost in health care dollars to treat obesity’s medical consequences—from diabetes to coronary heart disease to a variety of crippling bone conditions—will eventually make the battle against HIV/AIDS seem inexpensive.”
5. “NAAFA Policy,” page 488: “Weight-loss diets have long been promoted as a permanent cure for ‘obesity,’ although they rarely produce long-lasting or permanent results.”
6. Worley, page 496 (hint—explain what “it” is by adding your explanation in brackets [like here]): “I’m only beginning to discover what a marvelous gift it is.”
7. Seid, page 498: “We have elevated the pursuit of a lean, fat-free body into a new religion. It has a creed: ‘I eat right, watch my weight and exercise.’”
8. Schwartz, page 514 (hint—shorten this quote by using brackets [. . .] and ellipses): “If the tables could be turned, if this were a fat society, a society that admired and rewarded fatness—a society that has never existed in this country for both sexes at the same time—things would be very much different and very much better.”