

A GUIDE TO QUOTING CORRECTLY

Quotations are an author's direct wording used as evidence to support an argument in a paper. They can be helpful for defining terms, highlighting another author's argument, and supporting your own thesis statement.

Using both quotations and paraphrases within your paper will provide a good balance between your voice and the expert's voice.

PURPOSE OF QUOTATIONS

1. **It supports your argument.** – Using direct quotations from other authors indicates that other experts agree with the main claims in your paper.
2. **It highlights the words and phrases of authors.** – Quotations are best used when the author's word choice is a key point to an argument or when the author defines, describes, or captures a term well in a way that is difficult to paraphrase.

BLOCK QUOTES

1. **Block quotes present a large portion of material from one source.** – According to each manual, a block quote is “over four lines” (MLA, 1.3.2), “over five lines” (Turabian, 25.2), or “40 words or more” (APA, 7th ed, 8.27), and is set apart from the paragraph.
2. **Block quotes are great for larger papers when the majority of the paper will be focusing on the phrases and wordings of the quote.** – If a block quote is essential to the argument, include it in your paper, but only if you will be spending several paragraphs focusing on the information within the quote. They should be used sparingly and avoided in shorter papers as they remove the voice of the writer.

USING A QUOTATION RATHER THAN A PARAPHRASE

When debating between using a quotation or a paraphrase, here are some key questions to ask:

1. **How does the quotation support your argument?** Does the author describe or define a term in a way that is unique to the argument? If it is a block quote, is it essential to your argument? Do you need to continually refer back to it in order to build your argument and support it?
2. **How long is the quotation?** If it is a block quote, consider paraphrasing the information. Additionally, short phrases are ideal as they highlight the author's wording while keeping your writing voice.

INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS INTO YOUR PAPER

- 1. Introduce the quotation through ghost writing or a signal phrase.** Using a quotation without an introductory phrase can interrupt the flow of the paper. For more information on ghost writing, see our “Ghost Writing” resource. Some example signal phrases include:
 - Smith states, “writing is a skill more than a talent” (35).
 - According to Smith, “writing is a skill more than a talent” (35).
 - Asulf argues for the implementation of apprenticeships in the States: “Apprenticeships allow for each individual to work according to their gifts, rather than forcing the same gift set on each individual” (75).
- 2. Always provide commentary on the quotation.** Explain to the reader how the quotation supports or contradicts your argument. This ties your evidence back to your thesis statement and provides cohesion throughout the paper.
 - According to Williams, concise writing includes “active voice,” “active verbs,” and “clear subjects” (12). His emphasis on clear subjects and verbs can be seen implemented in writing courses and news articles today.
- 3. When changing information or wording within the quotation, use brackets or ellipses (...).** This notifies the reader of your own corrections. Use brackets to indicate a change in wording, and ellipses to indicate removed phrases from the quotation.
 - According to Florence, “[Insurance] is the... foundation for secure living” (23).
 - Original: “It is the best used as the foundation for secure living”.
- 4. When quoting phrases within a list, place quotation marks around every quoted phrase.** This distinguishes between your own work and the authors.
 - The recipe called for specific ingredients; “ostrich eggs,” “rye flour,” “aged brown sugar,” and “freshly churned butter” (Ramsey, 26).
- 5. When quoting dialogue within a quotation, use single quotation marks around the dialogue portion.** This avoids confusing between the beginning of the dialogue within the quotation and the end of the quotation itself.
 - Mrs. Bennett notes, “Two of her girls had been on the point of marriage, and after all there was nothing in it. ‘I do not blame Jane,’ she continued” (Austen, 99).
- 6. Finally, make sure to cite the quotation correctly according to your manual.** Use parenthetical citations for MLA and APA and footnote citations for Turabian/Chicago. For more information on citing according to each manual, check out our resources under “Formatting.”

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