



USING QUOTATIONS

Quotations are an important part of academic writing that allow writers to use the exact language from source materials. Quotes can be used when the language in the source is particularly interesting or when you want the reader to see exactly what the source author said.

However, quotes should not take-over your paper. The writing – especially the thesis, topic sentences, and the last sentence in your conclusion – should be your own writing. Let your sources help you develop, support and prove your arguments.

Every time you use a quote in your writing, you must include three things: (1) a **lead-in**, (2) the **quotation**, and (3) your **analysis**.

1. The **LEAD-IN**: This introduces your reader to the quotation you are about to use. This information may include:

- The author's name: Use the author's full name (first and last) for the first quotation. After that, you only need the author's last name.
- The author's background: You may want to include if relevant.
- The quotation's relationship to the surrounding argument: This information helps the reader understand how the quotation is connected to your thesis, the topic sentence of the paragraph, or other pieces of evidence already discussed.

2. The **ANALYSIS**: This is your reaction or interpretation of the quotation. You must clearly explain to your reader why you selected the quote, and how it connects to your thesis and the topic sentence of the paragraph.

3. The **QUOTATION**: A quotation is a copy of the exact words of the author, but you do not have to use the full sentence or even every word. Select the most important parts of the quote and incorporate them smoothly into you sentences. If you need to adjust the quotation to make the grammar clear, use brackets. If you need to shorten

the quote by taking words out of the middle, use an ellipsis. See our handout on Quotations and Punctuation, or ask a tutor, if you have a question about using the right punctuation.

WAYS TO INCORPORATE A QUOTE

There are many ways to incorporate a quotation into a sentence, and you should vary the different ways to keep your writing interesting. Some examples are:

- *Lead-in and Analysis Phrase + Comma*: The lead-in and the analysis are presented together in an introductory phrase, followed by a comma and the quotation:
 - Example: In “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” Thoreau states directly his purposes for going into the woods when he says, “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”
 - **Lead-In**: The author’s name (Thoreau) and the essay title (“Where I Lived, and What I Lived For”)
 - **Analysis**: “states directly his purposes for going into the woods”
- *Introductory Lead-in Phrase + Comma + Analysis*: The lead-in comes first, introducing the quotation. Following a comma, the analysis comes last.
 - Example: In “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” Thoreau states, “I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived,” which was his purpose for going into the woods.
- *Lead-In and Analysis Sentence + Colon*: The lead-in and the analysis are presented together in a full sentence, followed by a colon before the quotation.
 - Example: In “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” Thoreau states directly his purposes for going into the woods: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”
- *Interrupted Quotation*: The quotation is broken down into smaller quotes and integrated into your own sentence. The lead-in information can come first, or be sandwiched between the quotes. The analysis can come before or after the quotes.
 - Example: In “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” Thoreau states that his retreat to the woods around Walden Pond was motivated by his desire “to live deliberately” and to face only “the essential facts of life.”

- *Block Quote*: When a quotation is of a certain length, it should be set off from the text on a new, indented line. Although the rules differ for each citation style (see our handouts on Citations Styles for more details), all styles use a colon to introduce the quote after the lead-in, and do not use quotation marks around the quote.
 - Example: In “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” to explain his purpose for going into the woods, Thoreau states:
I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

TO QUOTE OR TO SUMMARIZE?

Remember that you do not always need to use a quote. Sometimes, summarizing or paraphrasing a source is a clear and concise way of conveying information to your reader, making it easier for them to understand. The following are general guidelines; there is no right or wrong way.

Use a *quote* when:

- You are quoting primary sources.
- You think specific wording the author used is important.
- You want your reader to interpret for themselves the meaning of the quote.

Summarize or paraphrase when:

- You are quoting from a secondary source.
- You are discussing background information.
- You are re-counting the basics points of a story (book, short story, play, etc.)

ALWAYS CITE

Remember that you always need to cite your quotations and summaries of sources, and include all the sources in your Works Cited, Works Referenced, or Bibliography. See our handouts on citation styles or ask a tutor if you have questions.