

QUOTATIONS AND PLAGIARISM

Quotations and paraphrases can be used to support a paper and make an argument stronger, especially if the quotation comes from a well-known authority on the discussion topic. They provide evidence and further credibility, but when used too much, they may work against clarity and a strong tone. Well-balanced papers use evidence, like quotations, data, and statistics, in moderation. It is important to know when to use quotations, as well as how to integrate them correctly. Don't allow the voices of others command your paper. Quotations are a powerful support, but the you must do the building.

WHEN TO USE A QUOTATION

- To support an argument or idea.
- To support your claim or thesis
- To provide authority to your argument

SELECTING AND USING QUOTATIONS

Select and use quotations that

- support the argument (or provide a counterpoint which the author will argue against).
- explain and summarize the quotations.
- introduce quotations with the correct verb tense,
- give credit where it is due using first and last names,
- follow the 1-3 ratio (3 lines of original material for every 1 line quoted).

INTRODUCING A QUOTATION

A quotation should be introduced, not thrown into a paper. There are many ways to introduce a quotation. For example:

- John Smith says
- Smith states
- Smith announces
- Smith argues
- According to Smith

EXPLAIN

When you quote something, it must be followed by some explanation placing it in the context of your thesis. Don't assume that a reader will understand why a quotation is relevant; summarize or explain it. Here are some good lead-ins for explanation:

- Smith argues, “___,” proving that...
- According to Smith, “___.” This indicates...

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using another author's words or ideas without giving them credit. To avoid plagiarizing, credit authors when you summarize, paraphrase, or quote directly, and make it clear when your ideas are based on or borrowed largely from another source. There are three ways to quote someone else's words, and all of them require a citation to avoid plagiarism:

Direct Quotation:

Direct quotations are when you use someone else's exact words in your paper. They are placed in quotation marks.

Example: Thomas Jefferson began the Declaration of Independence with the words, "We the People" (Jefferson).

Paraphrase:

Paraphrasing is when an author uses a few ideas from a short section of a document's work, such as a paragraph. To avoid plagiarism, ensure that you use your own words and structure to convey the ideas and cite the work from which you borrow them. Example: The Declaration of Independence states that people are entitled to privileges based only on their humanity (Jefferson).

Summary

Summaries generalize the main points or meaning of an entire document. Example: The Declaration of Independence notified England that the colonies now considered themselves their own country and declared the rights that they felt they were entitled to as human beings from their government.

GIVING CREDIT

The most important thing to remember about using quotations is that it is necessary to give credit to whoever said the quotation. Even when not using a specified citation style, like MLA or APA, it is important to always give credit for the quotation. If a writer does not give credit, it is considered plagiarism. The one exception to this rule is for well-known quotations such as the Declaration of Independence, Shakespeare, and the Bible.