

QUOTING AND PARAPHRASING Using and Citing Sources in Your Writing

As writers, we draw on the words and ideas of other people for various reasons, usually to offer evidence and support for our arguments. As academic writers, we are expected to make references to the work of others; readers assume that we have read and considered a variety of sources on our topic, and they expect us to make explicit connections to them.

Depending on audience and purpose, different conventions will govern the ways in which sources should be cited, but in general, whenever you cite another text, whether you're quoting or paraphrasing, you need to identify its original source in enough detail to enable your readers to locate it. If the source of a reference is not well-known to your audience, you will have to provide a list of the works you have cited, with all of their publishing information. Keep in mind that **you must cite and identify all outside sources**, whether they come from printed or electronic texts.

The following are some general guidelines about the mechanics of quoting and citing other texts in your writing. These rules of thumb will suffice in most cases, but you may be expected to use another specific format or method of documentation. If you are not sure what the requirements are, find out from your teacher, boss, editor, or publisher. A good handbook will provide you with the guidelines to follow for most writing situations.

Introducing Quotations When you include quoted material in your writing, be sure to introduce it and put it into context for your reader; don't let it "float" unconnected to your text.

Example of a "floating" quotation from a student's paper: When I first came to Cal State, I didn't know what to expect, and even the things I thought I understood ended up being not as I assumed they would. "It is not unusual for students to come to the university with conceptualizations of disciplines that are out of sync with academic reality."

Revised to integrate and introduce the quotation: When I first came to Cal State, I didn't know what to expect, and even the things I thought I understood ended up being not as I assumed they would. As Mike Rose points out in *Lives on the Boundary*, "It is not unusual for students to come to the university with conceptualizations of disciplines that are out of sync with academic reality" (191). This was certainly my experience.

The first time you mention another text in your essay, identify it using both the title and the author's full name as it is printed. After this initial identification, refer to the author by last name only, omitting titles such as Mr., Ms., Dr., or Prof.

Choosing and Identifying Direct Quotes In general, it's best to be fairly sparing in your use of direct quotes, choosing specific quotes or passages to make a point and illustrate your ideas, not just to fill space. Whenever you use the exact language from another source (a direct quote), be sure to put it in quotation marks, even if it is just a few words or consists of key words or

phrases that are clearly unique to that writer, or if you want to emphasize the fact that you are using the writer's phrasing, not your own. For example:

Original from Rose: "Business-school alliances will not result in fundamental, long-range educational change if the terms of the alliances essentially have the powerful bestowing momentary beneficence on beleaguered classrooms" (B5).

Student's reference: We have every reason in the world to be cautious about accepting a corporation's "momentary beneficence," as Rose calls it, if we are indeed concerned about "fundamental, long-range educational change."

The "rules" of quoting are not always as clear as we'd like or as simple as they sound, so you must always use your own good judgment.

Accurate Quoting When you are citing and responding to other writers' work, you need to quote accurately, not only reproducing the exact language from a text, but also making certain that you don't inadvertently misrepresent the writer's argument out of its original context. For example:

Tannen states, "The students are engaged in a heated debate. The very noise level reassures the teacher that the students are participating, taking responsibility for their own learning. Education is going on. The class is a success" (233).

The language from Tannen's essay is quoted correctly, but this excerpt could lead someone to think that she is arguing precisely the opposite of what she actually is. In the statement above, Tannen is presenting an *opposing* point of view to her own, which she then goes on to refute in her essay. As in writing a summary, you need to understand a writer's argument thoroughly in order to represent it accurately when you quote from it.

Paraphrasing When you paraphrase, you state someone else's ideas in your own words. Paraphrasing is often a more economical way to refer to a reading, but **you must still credit the source**. Consult your handbook for specific guidance on acceptable and unacceptable paraphrases.

Avoiding Plagiarism Following the conventions of quoting and citing your sources serves several functions: it lets your readers know what your sources of information are; it identifies them for your readers, who may want to locate and read them themselves; and it helps you to avoid charges of plagiarism, most basically defined as claiming someone else's work as your own. Often it is difficult to know exactly what or whom to credit, but academic integrity requires that you represent as completely and accurately as possible all of the different contributions to your writing, whether they come from a book or other printed matter, from another person, or from the internet.

Verb Tense and Punctuation

- When you refer to a reading, use the present tense: Anyon argues rather than argued.
- Titles of essays, articles, short stories, or short poems are put in quotation marks; titles of longer works, such as books, movies, magazines, newspapers, are italicized or underlined.
- Commas and periods go inside the quotation marks; question marks do only if they are part of the original quote.
- An ellipsis (. . .) shows that words have been omitted from the original quote; square brackets ([]) show that you have changed the language from the original. You may make such changes to fit the quoted portion grammatically into your own sentence, to clarify something that is confusing out of its original context, or to make it more economical, leaving out words or phrases that are not necessary to make your point. In any case you must be sure that the omission or the change is not misleading and does not misrepresent the intent of the original.

Original from Rose: “When children are raised in communities where economic opportunity has dramatically narrowed, where the future is bleak, sealed off, their perception of and engagement with school will be negatively affected.”

Quote with ellipsis and brackets: Kids who come from these “communities where economic opportunity has [been] dramatically narrowed . . . [and] sealed off” often have perceptions of school which have been “negatively affected.”

If you find you are making many alterations to make a quote fit, you may instead want to introduce and set it off intact or paraphrase it. Your audience has good reason to wonder what has been changed or left out, and too many unanswered questions may damage your credibility.