QUOTING EFFECTIVELY

Created by Rachel E. Bennett, June, 2008
For The Write Site at Texas Woman’s University
Value of Quotations

Using quotations in your scholarly papers is a helpful way to:

- Provide support and credibility to your writing
- Refer to work that leads up to your paper
- Give examples of several points of view
- Call attention to a position that you wish to agree or disagree with
- Highlight a striking phrase, sentence, or passage by quoting the original
- Expand the depth of your writing
Quoting Guidelines

Many writing handbooks offer information on guidelines for quoting sources.

- The Writer’s Harbrace Handbook
- The Bedford Handbook for Writers
- The Little, Brown Handbook
When to Quote

- As a general rule of thumb, if you are using more than THREE words of another source, you should quote it. Also, if a quote is the best, clearest, and most powerful way to express an idea, you should quote rather than paraphrase or summarize.
A **paraphrase** takes the ideas and main points from a source and changes the structure and wording from that of the original quote. It does not need to be in quotations, but must be cited the same way a quote is cited. For more information on paraphrases, click [here](#) or check out The Write Site’s [Plagiarism Presentation](#).
A summary is a much shorter overview of the main points from a source. It contains no direct quotes from the source, so does not require quotation marks, but does require the same citation and credit to the source as a quote and paraphrase. For more information on summaries, click here or check out The Write Site’s Plagiarism Presentation.
Avoid Plagiarism

It is important to be careful when using quotes to avoid plagiarism. (Click here to view The Write Site’s plagiarism tutorial)

You must give credit to the source by citing the quote in the style that your discipline/class requires.

- MLA
- APA
- ASA
- Chicago
- Turabian

Check out The Write Site or our online tutorials for assistance with using these styles.
It is easy to fall into the habit of quoting too frequently, but once you master the three types of quotes, you can avoid this easily and effectively.

- Simple Attribution
- Partial Quotation
- Separate Sentence
Simple Attribution

In this type of quote, you simply introduce the quote, quote the full sentence, and cite it.

- Joseph Williams describes his opinion of arbitrary grammar rules that inhibit style by stating, “In this matter, we are choosing not between better and worse, but between right and utterly, irredeemably, unequivocally, existentially Wrong” (14).
Partial Quotation

For this type, you will work a small portion of a quote into your own sentence, usually still introducing it and always citing it.

- Joseph Williams argues against the grammar rules which force us to choose “between right and utterly, irredeemably, unequivocally, existentially Wrong” (14), and thus inhibit our freedom in style of writing.
In this type of quotation, you will have a complete sentence of your own, as well as a complete quote. You will still usually introduce it and always cite it. Be careful to lead up to the quote and connect it to your sentence or you will have a dumped quotation (as described later).

In this book, the author discusses his opinions of arbitrary grammar rules and their negative influence over style: “In this matter, we are choosing not between better and worse, but between right and utterly, irredeemably, unequivocally, existentially Wrong” (Williams 14).
Guidelines for Quoting #1

Quotes from primary sources can support your main points and strengthen your ideas, but it is important to be careful not to “over-quote.” Look at other scholarly works to see how frequently the authors used quotes and/or talk to your professors about their opinions on the matter.

“In 1818 John Keats journeyed” to a town “in south Devon” to visit his brother Tom who was “dying of tuberculosis” (MacKensie 477). Tom “had gone there for palliative care” since Devon was known “for the healthy qualities of its climate” and stayed “at a house near the quayside” (MacKenzie 477).
Guidelines for Quoting #2

Whenever you use the exact words from a source, you must use quotation marks or you will be plagiarizing. Be careful when choosing to paraphrase or summarize rather than to quote. You must change the structure and wording significantly, otherwise, you will still be plagiarizing.
Guidelines for Quoting #3

Quotes must be copied word-for-word; even if the quote itself has a typo. For instance:

- “If he wanted hit [sic] done different, why didn’t he wait and tell you how?” (Faulkner 16).

The [sic] in brackets stands for “thus in the source” (MLA 271) and denotes the fact that the “typo” (whether by author intention, or by mistake) was in the text and not one of your own.
Guidelines for Quoting #4

Quote selectively. Select quotations that fit your topic and meaning rather than distributing them aimlessly to lengthen your essay.

- Keats is well known for having had a vivid imagination and “in 1818 John Keats journeyed” to a town “in south Devon” to visit his brother Tom who was “dying of tuberculosis” (MacKensie 477).

Quotes should be used to support and clarify your ideas/claims, not as filler.
Guidelines for Quoting #5

Avoid dumped or disembodied quotations. These are quotations that appear in their own separate sentence, apparently without introduction, and do not seem related to the previous or following sentences.

- Sometimes it appears that grammar rules are arbitrary. “In this matter, we are choosing not between better and worse, but between right and utterly, irredeemably, unequivocally, existentially Wrong [sic]” (Williams 14).

**Dumped Quote!**

- In this book, the author discusses his opinions of grammar’s negative influence over style: “In this matter, we are choosing not between better and worse, but between right and utterly, irredeemably, unequivocally, existentially Wrong” (Williams 14). **Much Better!**
Guidelines for Quoting #6

Avoid lengthy quotes when you can.

One option is to shorten longer quotes by deleting sections and replacing them with ellipsis.

- When following grammar rules, it appears that “‘correctness’ [in grammar] requires neither good taste nor sound judgment . . . but only good memory” (Williams 14).

Make sure that the remaining words reflect the source’s meaning and that your sentence structure does not become awkward.
Guidelines for Quoting #7

If you must use a quote of more than four typed lines, you should begin a new line, omit quotation marks, and indent ten spaces. Check your style manual for the differences in citations in this case.

Keats discusses his opinions of modern, fame-seeking poets by comparing their attempts for attention to the reserved Elizabethan poets.

How beautiful are the retired flowers! How would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway crying out, "admire me I am a violet! Dote upon me I am a primrose! Modern poets differ from the Elizabethans in this. (493)
Sometimes you will need to add a word or two to a quote to make your sentence flow or to clarify a reference. In this case, you may add words inside [brackets], but be careful not to distort the author’s intended meaning.

- It appears that “‘correctness’ [in grammar] requires neither good taste nor sound judgment” and is actually based on arbitrary rules created and changed as recently as a year ago (Williams 14).
Guidelines for Quoting #9

Vary the types of quotations you use, intermingling the three types to add interest and avoid repetition.

- Williams claims “‘correctness’ [in grammar] requires neither good taste nor sound judgment” (Williams 14). Williams also states “we are choosing not between better and worse, but between right and. . . Wrong” Williams 14). In his book on style, Williams expresses “that some points of ‘Correctness’ are less important than many may think” (Williams 14).
Several verbs are available to help you weave quotations into your writing smoothly. Choose carefully to make sure they capture your meaning.

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Examples #10

- Williams reveals his opinions on modern English grammar through this pointed statement; “Some points of ‘Correctness’ are less important than many may think” (14).

- Though grammarians may disagree, Williams maintains “that some points of ‘Correctness’ are less important than many may think” (14).

- William asserts that modern grammar is a deterrent to style by stating, “Unlike matters of style, correctness seems not to offer choices, but to require obedience” (14).
Other Resources

- Check out: “They Say / I Say” The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein
- And Harner’s On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography for some quoting guides.
Visit The Write Site!

The Write Site at TWU is located on the first floor of CFO in room 129.

Call 940-898-2341 to make an appointment, but sometimes we are available for walk-ins!

Also, The Write Site offers an On-line Writing Lab (the OWL) where you can submit papers for assistance!

Just check out The Write Site’s web-page at www.twu.edu/writesite/ for details!


