

How We Use Quotations in Our Writing

What is a quote?

- It is a word or group of words that are copied word-for-word from another source.
- A quote is *always* put between “quotation marks.”

When do we use quotes?

- We use quotes selectively, when the author’s words offer important information that is better as-is, instead of paraphrased, or when the original author’s words are powerful and it is better left unchanged.
- A loose goal you can set for yourself is to only make 10% or less of your paper quotations.

How do we integrate a quote into our writing?

The Quote Sandwich

You always want to avoid a “dangling quote,” which is a quote that is added to your writing, but is added without further connection to the main idea of your paragraph or essay. You can avoid it by using “the quote sandwich.”

An example of a dangling quote is as follows:

Green design in engineering can also be effective in reducing the amount of resources needed to produce a product. Principle five of green engineering states that “system components should be ‘output-pulled’ rather than ‘input-pushed’ through the use of energy and materials” (Anastas & Zimmerman, 2003). Engineering practices should also use renewable materials in order to move towards better sustainability. Green design will help make engineering more financially feasible.

To properly integrate a quote, you follow 3 steps:

1st: The introduction (The top bread)

2nd: The quote (The meat & veggies)

3rd: The explanation of the quote (the bottom bread)

1st Introducing a quote is simple. All you need to do is give basic information about the author. Avoid too much repetition in using the same introduction styles, such as “according to...” You’ll find that if you introduce your quotations by stating the author’s specific position or tone that is in the quote, your subsequent analysis (the bottom bread) will be more effectively previewed.

Here are some templates:

As the prominent philosopher X put it, “_____.”
According to X, “_____.”
In X’s view, “_____.”
X states, “_____.”
X agrees when she writes, “_____.”
X complicates the matter when she writes, “_____.”
X confirms this in his/her book when he/she says, “_____.”
X remarks, “_____.”
X writes, “_____.”
X notes, “_____.”
X comments, “_____.”
X observes, “_____.”
X concludes, “_____.”
X reports, “_____.”
X maintains, “_____.”
X adds, “_____.”

Note: Always use a comma before your quotation begins, as seen above. However, if your introduction to the quote ends with *that* or *as*, don’t follow it with a comma, and the first letter of the quote is lowercased.

Examples:

X points out that "millions of students would like to burn this book" (53).
X argues that “_____” (205).
X emphasizes that “_____” (76).
X interprets the hand washing in MacBeth as "an attempt at absolution" (106).
X describes the novel as "a celebration of human experience" (233).

2nd When you add the quote to your text, be selective about your quote! Avoid quoting general facts that everyone knows, for example. Add relevant, new information that directly supports the main idea you are writing about.

3rd When you explain your quote, analyze the connection between the new information your quote is providing and the information you have already provided in your topic and thesis sentence. Don’t expect the reader to make this connection!! The more you can make the nuances evident, the more effective your overall argument will be. Please do not just paraphrase the quote in your explanation.