

Quotation Conventions

Created by John Howery in 1998
Update for the Writers Lab by Sherri Wahrer

Many of the papers you write in college will contain quotations from outside sources of information. This handout was designed to help you better understand when quotations are warranted, and it was also designed to help you better integrate them into your papers.

When you should use quotations

- when the author's words are so impressive or so clever that to put them in your own words would lessen their impact
- when the author's words are so precise that to put them in your own words would impact their meaning
- when the author's words are so concise that you would need twice as many words to paraphrase the passage or relay its meaning

Incorporating quotations

- Introduce or in some way lead into the quotation so readers know whose words are being quoted and why the quotation's important (i.e. John Doe, editor of Some Magazine, shocked his readers by printing, ".....")
- Comment on the quotation after you have included it so readers understand its connection to the other points in your paper
- Insert ellipses (...) if you delete any words from the original quotation
- Use brackets [] to add your own words or to substitute words for those in the original quotation (such practice is usually reserved for clarifying meaning for readers)

And now, examples of various ways you can implement quotations (drum-roll, please...)

To show the author's point of view...

- In (title of text), (the author) concludes that "..."
- The following quotation reveals (the author's) bias: "..."

- Unlike most professors, (the author) believes that "..."
- (The author) is opposed to the idea that "..."
- (The author) is in favor of the idea that "..."
- (The author) argues well that "..."

To show agreement with the author...

- I agree with (the author's) point that "..."
- Like (the author), I believe that "..."
- (The author) is correct when (she/he) says that "..."
- My own experience has shown that "..."
- (The author) is wise to argue that "..."
- (The author) argues well that "..."

To show disagreement with the author...

- In my opinion, (the author's) point that "... is wrong.
- When (the author) argues that "...," (his/her) reasoning is flawed.
- (The author) is unwise to claim that "..."
- I disagree with (the author's) idea that "..."
- (The author) fails to address the issue when (she/he) says, "..."
- It is not a question of "...," but one of ...

To show partial agreement with the author...

- (The author's) point that "... is only partly true.
- (The author's) argument that "... has some merit but is not convincing.

- While I agree with (the author) that "...," I do not agree with (his/her) idea that "..."
- (The author's) view that "..." may be true for some, but not for all.
- To say, as (the author) does, that "..." is true, but the point is irrelevant to the issue.