

A World of Difference

“Quotes, Quotes, Quotes!”

When and How to Use Them
in Your Academic Writing*

(Direct Quotes, Introductory Phrases, Explication, Integrating
Quotes, Block Quotes, Quote, Quote Punctuations, Quotes in
Quotes, Paraphrases, and Summary)

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*For APA 7th edition and MLA 8th edition citations

Direct Quotes – The Basics

A direct quote either uses an entire sentence or specific words and phrases from a referenced work that was not developed or written by the author. Often, simple direct quotes include an entire sentence. Quotes always use an in-text citation or reference to the corresponding author or text.

- **Example:** Clark (2006) states, “The proper acknowledgment of sources is an important issue to consider.”
- **Explanation:** Because this quote has introduced the author at the beginning of the sentence, there is no need to cite the source at the end of this sentence.

A World of Difference

Direct Quotes – Introductory Phrases

Often, skilled writers introduce quotes with a sentence or two that either provides important background information about the author or the text being referenced.

- **Example:** Clark wrote an entire book on thesis and dissertations, titled, *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation* (2006). She says, “The proper acknowledgement of sources is an important issue to consider” (Clark 2006).
- **Explanation:** Although this example is clearly redundant, it demonstrates the introduction of a quote with a bit of background information about the source, followed by the direct quote itself. Even though the source is introduced in the first sentence, the citation still should be placed at the end of this second sentence to ensure that the reader knows where it comes from. If you are unsure whether or not to place a citation, you probably should place it, just to be safe.
- **Note:** A detailed introductory phrase is not always needed. If the audience is expected to know or be familiar with a particular text, a quote may be introduced simply by its content, with the citation provided at the end. It is up to the academic to determine when and how to introduce quotes. Consideration of the audience and their needs as readers is always the most important factor when deciding how to use quotes.

Direct Quotes - Explication

Generally after using a quote, the writer should include a similar amount of lines of their own text to elaborate on, explain, “unpack,” or expand on a quote and its meaning.

- **Example:** Clark has written much about thesis and dissertation work, including her book *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation* (2006). She notes that “The proper acknowledgment of sources is an important issue to consider” (Clark 2006). **In order to avoid plagiarism, the inclusion of in-text citations is the most important part of acknowledging sources.**
- **Explanation:** This explication demonstrates not only that the writer knows why they are using a certain quote but also helps put its meaning in context of the rest of their writing. Often, explication will acknowledge or use certain words or phrases that the quote uses, discussing their meaning or explaining their use in this new context. In the example above, “acknowledging” and “sources” are repeated while the inclusion of additional details and meaning from the author’s phrase, “avoid plagiarism,” make the quote take on more meaning.

A World of Difference

Things to Avoid!

- Standalone Quotes

This kind of direct quote is probably the least desirable, stylistically. Standalone direct quotes are quotes that are not part of any other sentence before or after. Sometimes called “Dropped-In” Quotes, these references often appear amateur-ish or hasty. In worst cases, these quotes may even be confusing for readers.

- **Example:** Clark has written much about thesis and dissertation work, including her book *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation* (2006). She often speaks out about the importance of proper citation. “The proper acknowledgment of sources is an important issue to consider” (Clark 2006). In order to avoid plagiarism, the inclusion of in-text citations is the most important part of acknowledging sources.
- **Explanation:** Although it is technically correct and includes both a proper introduction, an acknowledgement of the author, and a bit of explication after its use, the quote has been directly dropped between two sentences without additional content. This may leave the reader with several unanswered questions. Who is the speaker? What was the writer talking about when they wrote/said this? Even when (as in this example), the author has tried to address the quote as much as possible to compensate, the quote is stylistically awkward.

Excellent Quote Use - The Integrated Quote

A stylistically desirable and more advanced method of quoting, this technique takes another author's words and blends them into the writer's own sentence without creating multiple new sentences. The quote becomes part of the sentence by being broken down into small phrases and words. This may also save space or time for readers and writers.

- **Example:** The author of *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation* writes about “proper acknowledgment of sources” when discussing plagiarism and citation use, going so far as to refer to it as “an important issue to consider” in this conversation (Clark 2006).
- **Explanation:** These key phrases or words emphasize only the parts of the quote that is most relevant to the point that the author is trying to make. There may be multiple reasons to integrate or blend quotes in this way. The entire quote may be too long or irrelevant to put, in which case, having only certain parts may be easier. The user may be using multiple, similar quotes, in which case, emphasizing the unique language of one source may be more effective than citing an entire line or paragraph. Regardless of the reason, it is very important that when quotes are integrated as part of an author's own sentence, the proper citation is given and the quote's meaning not be taken out of context or misrepresented. Explication can help in this matter.

A World of Difference

Long Quotes/Block Quotes

When using a quote that is **more than 4 lines** in MLA 8 style or **more than 40 words** in APA 7 Style, the quotation is started on a new line, with the entire quote indented once, so that the block of text is ½ in from the left margin. No blank lines of space should be included before or after the quote.

Example (in APA):

In their text *Reading, Writing, and Discussing at the Graduate Level: A Guidebook for International Students* (2019), the authors discuss the proper uses of the theoretical framework at the graduate level:

The framework for your paper may provide a lens that demonstrates how the author perceives the major concepts or facts in the paper based on certain theories, philosophies, or practices. When developing the framework for your paper, it should be grounded in viewpoints, concepts, and ideas presented in other studies or conceptual literature. (Kim et. al. 2019, p. 38)

Although the authors do not provide examples of some of these frameworks, there are multiple possibilities. A framework may be based on the previous work of one or several other authors in tandem,

A World of Difference

Notes:

- The quote is introduced with a colon (:) but may also be introduced with a comma, depending on the circumstances.
- **No quotation marks are used.**
- The in-text citation (Author, Year, page) is placed at the end of the quote, after the punctuation. This is true in MLA and APA formats.
- When the text continues after the quote, it is not indented and instead starts flush with the margin. This is because, in general, the line following the block quote is considered a continuation of the paragraph above.
- Authors should be selective with their block quotes; these quotes are presented so that the entire context or meaning of the words are preserved. They are not meant to be a tool to take up space in a paper.

Quote Punctuations –

Periods, Colons, Commas, Parentheses, Exclamation Marks, and Question Marks

Beginning of Quotes: When quotes are introduced as part of a sentence after an independent clause, a comma (,) or colon (:) is used to offset them. The first letter of the quotation goes capitalized, as if it was the start of a new sentence. For short quotes, the in-text citation is placed (in parentheses) after the quotation marks, and a period is placed at the end.

- EX: As the group famously once said, “I get by with a little help from my friends” (The Beatles 1965).
- EX: In the famous song, the singer bemoans the loss of his love: “Why she had to go, I don’t know; she wouldn’t say” (The Beatles 1965).

Additional Commas: When a quote is incorporated into a sentence, a comma is not used *unless* the grammar and sentence structure calls for it. If a comma is needed next to quotation marks, the comma is placed inside the quotation marks, rather than outside them.

- EX: The singer recalls “the time or place” that he cannot forget where he meets the unnamed girl for the first time (The Beatles 1965).
- EX: The singer states that he is “fallin’” and he “wants all the world” to see them together (The Beatles 1965).

Questions and Exclamations: When a quote ends in a question mark (?) or exclamation mark (!), the punctuation is preserved inside the quotations if the quote includes it, with a period at the end after the in-text citation. However, if the punctuation is part of the author’s own text, the punctuation is placed after the citation.

- EX: In this short song, the singer cries for help, indicating, “Help! I need somebody!” (The Beatles 1965).
- EX: Who is the singer talking about when he asserts that he has “just seen a face” (The Beatles 1965)?

A World of Difference

Quote Punctuations – Ellipses, Brackets and Shortened Quotes

Omissions: Words in a quote may be omitted if they are not relevant to the text, are too long, or When only part of the quote is presented, it is appropriate to use an ellipsis (...) to indicate words that have been left out or omitted. As always, it is crucial not to omit words in such a way as to misrepresent the meaning of the author.

- EX: The singer emphasizes words by repeating them: “Suddenly...Yesterday came suddenly” (The Beatles 1965).

Changes and Additions: Words in a quote may be changed or added to in order to clarify the meaning of the quote. These changes almost always clarify pronouns into nouns and proper nouns. When these changes are made, brackets [] are placed around the newly inserted word.

- EX: Some conspiracy enthusiasts assert that Lennon is addressing McCartney directly in this song: “Help me if you can; I’m feeling down. And I do appreciate [Paul] being round” (The Beatles 1965).

Others’ Errors: If any incorrect spelling, punctuation, or grammar in the source might confuse readers or must be emphasized, insert the word “[sic],” italicized and in brackets immediately after the error in the quotation, rather than correcting it.

- EX: The singer cavalierly states, “She’s got a ticket to ride, but she don’t [sic] care” (The Beatles 1965).

Emphasis Added: In order to emphasize something in a quotation which is particularly relevant, put the emphasized words in italics, and state that the emphasis is your own.

- For example: Fractions appear in the song as a theme: “Suddenly I’m not *half* [emphasis added] the man I used to be” (The Beatles 1965).

A World of Difference

Quotes within Quotes

Secondary Sources: If choosing to use a direct quotation that was found inside another source, APA recommends trying to read and cite the primary source directly whenever possible. However, if this is not possible, then the quote should be cited as a secondary source with the words “as cited in,” followed by the citation for the source where the quote was found. For MLA, the citation begins with “qtd. in,” followed by the citation for the work where the quote was found. These are placed in the in-text citation.

- APA ex: “Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away” (The Beatles, 1965, as cited in Time, 2019).
- MLA ex: “Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away” (qtd. in Time, 2019).

Phrases and Dialogue: If the quote you are using has quotations in it (as in quotes for dialogue, turns of phrase, or individual preserved words), change the quotation marks around those quotations from double-marks (“ ”) to single-marks, i.e. apostrophes (‘ ’).

- EX: The singer laments, “I can see them laugh at me, and I hear them say, ‘Hey, you’ve got to hide your love away.’” (The Beatles 1965).

In Block Quotes: If the quote is being placed into a block quote and contains quotes, the quotes in the block quote retain their double quotation marks (“ ”). This is an exception for the standard rule that block quotes do not contain quotation marks. (See example on right.)

APA has new guidelines for talking about people of various races and ethnicities:

Racial and ethnic groups are designated by proper nouns and are capitalized. Therefore, use “Black” and “White” instead of “black” and “white” (do not use colors to refer to other human groups; doing so is considered pejorative). Likewise, capitalize terms such as “Native American,” “Hispanic,” and so on. Capitalize “Indigenous” and “Aboriginal” whenever they are used. Capitalize “Indigenous People” or “Aboriginal People” when referring to a specific group. (American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 142).

It is important to bear in mind that many of these guidelines have been in place for awhile in a defacto

Paraphrase

Often in scientific research fields and occasionally in humanities fields, it is not necessary or appropriate to use direct quotations. In these cases, the paraphrase is used to condense broad from another author into a short sentence or two. Paraphrasing does not use quotation marks, but it always includes a proper citation in the exact same way that a direct quote would.

- **Example:** Kim et. al. (2019) discuss frameworks of academic papers. They note that a framework may provide a mixture of thoughts and theories from other texts that act as a guide or lens for the entire paper, essay, or thesis (Kim et. al. 2019). An example of a framework might be the composition process theory used by Irene Clark to discuss the writing process and research organization in texts produced in higher education (Clark 2006).
- **Explanation:** This is a paraphrase of the earlier quote (seen in the Block Quote slide). Although some of the words and language of the text overall has been preserved, much of it has been rephrased in order to be both easier for the audience to understand and because there was not a need, in this case, to preserve all of the language of the original long quote. The in-text citation is used, just as it was in the direct quotations.

A World of Difference

Summary

A summary condenses all of the major or main points of another text into a few points within a new sentence. An entire paper or book may be summarized, but just as with quotations and paraphrases, a citation is required when referring to outside texts. A summary is different from a paraphrase in that while a paraphrase rephrases an idea or a few ideas from a text into a smaller sentence, a summary attempts to condense the entire work.

- **Example:** Irene Clark's book *Writing the Successful Thesis or Dissertation* (2006), is a guide for students in higher education who are pursuing masters and doctoral work. In it, the author provides strategies for the entire process of advanced writing, including roadmaps for planning out the process, places to look for initial research and reading, tips for writers who are stuck on a particular section or chapter, practices for revising and editing, and even considerations for writers who have completed the process and find themselves unsure what to do after the writing seems finished (Clark 2006).
- **Explanation:** This summary details several chapters of the book given as an example. The summary lists specific concepts and practices of the text, but it does not go into detail about the ideas of the book, nor does it attempt to directly quote or rephrase those ideas into new words. However, since it is referenced directly as part of the author's text, its inclusion as part of the text requires an in-text citation of some sort.

A World of Difference

Practice and experiment!

- Rules for quotations, especially for their placement, may be similar across styles and formats, but they are subject to change over time. Practice using different kinds of quotes until you become familiar with their use, and be sure to consult your instructors, institutions, organizations, and style guides for the style that is best for your writing.
- Skilled writers use a variety of reference techniques, and different situations call for different kinds of citations.

A World of Difference

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A World of Difference