

Using Quotations

WHEN TO USE QUOTATIONS:

Use quotations only if they are a must; do not use them if they are no more special than your words.

HOW TO USE QUOTATIONS:

LENGTH: Keep quotations as short as possible.

Use ellipses and brackets to control how much of a quotation you use.

Long quotations—especially if used frequently—are distracting to readers. And they are likely to include material that is not essential or even relevant to your paper.

TRANSITION: Use an introduction to fit the quotation smoothly into your text and to explain why you are using it. A quotation cannot stand by itself.

Use the **NAME** of the author (full name if not provided earlier in text) and some **IDENTIFICATION** of the author (sometimes even if provided earlier).

Identifying the source of a quotation in a footnote does not tell the reader its author.

Use verbs that help explain the relationship between your ideas and those in the quotation. See examples of verbs that can change the meaning of a quotation.

Do not identify someone's words as "a quotation." People make statements, not quotations.

METHODS OF TRANSITION/INTRODUCTION: Use various methods of fitting in and introducing quotations.

The president argued that his opponents were “idiots.”

According to the teacher, “the student was grade crazy.”

“He was a hated man,” his wife argued.

His horror at what he saw was overwhelming: “How could men do this to each other?”

The diplomatic note pointed out that “there was no difference . . .” in how the two countries were thinking.

“No matter what happens,” the general sighed, “the battle is lost.”

For introducing blocked (indented, single-spaced longer) quotations:

The following steps were detailed in the treaty:

The general explained his about the battle.

The new statute provided that

LOCATION: While it is not an absolute rule, try not to end paragraphs with quotations. Most of the time readers need a post-quotation explanation to understand fully what they are supposed to get out of a quotation.

GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION: Make sure that verb tense in quotations is compatible with your text. Use ellipses and brackets to make necessary changes.

VERBS AND QUOTATIONS

Try some of the following verbs in these sentences. See how the verbs can both subtly and dramatically change the meaning of each sentence.

The king _____, *"This is war."*

She _____, *"I am innocent."*

acknowledged
admitted
announced
argued
claimed
commented
conceded
concluded
confessed
decided
declared
decreed
denied
dictated
disclosed
exclaimed
held
hinted

implored
insisted
insinuated
interjected
lamented
lied
maintained
observed
ordered
pointed out
proclaimed
proposed
quibbled
quipped
ranted
read
reasoned
rebutted

recognized
reiterated
remarked
repeated
reported
ruled
screamed
stated
supplicated
swore
testified
thought
translated
urged
uttered
vowed
warned
whined