



UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

cultivating purpose-driven writers, communicators, & influencers
write + revise + persuade

Quoting With Impact

Kennedy Luevano

The purpose of this article is to provide practical advice and techniques to effectively select, introduce, analyze, and integrate quotations to enhance the clarity and credibility of your work.

To Quote or Not to Quote?

Some beginning writers assume inaccuracies about research, like that quoting is cheating, or that they should not need to reference outside sources. The truth is that writers earn trust and credibility by incorporating valid quotes and evidence into their writing. Further, integrating quotations adds depth and authority to your arguments, and sometimes you should quote to achieve a certain rhetorical effect. However, seamless integration requires more than just dropping quotes into the text.

It is essential to carefully select the quotations and evidence you will use to support your claims. Too many writers include quotes that have little relevance to their argument but place them in the paper because they know they must include evidence, or because they don't yet feel confident writing. Writers must select quotations that align with their argument and contribute meaningfully to their overall argument or purpose. All quotations should provide support for your claims, add depth to your analysis, and resonate with your intended audience.

It is equally important to introduce quotes. This is key to avoiding harsh transitions and maintaining the flow of your writing. One way to smoothly integrate a quotation into your sentence is by introducing the original author of the quote in a well-crafted a segue, such as,

Thomas Jefferson famously wrote that all people have the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Be sure to avoid the floating quote, which occurs when an author just drops a quote in a passage, expecting the quote to do all the writing for them. Note that the example below quotes the Declaration, but it doesn't integrate the ideas expressed in the quote in its own sentences.

Natural law is fundamental to democracy. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." These are the principles we hold to in our country.

Keep in mind that sometimes a well-written summary or paraphrase works just as well as a quotation. In fact, many readers prefer summaries and paraphrases to quotes because they want to read your words, not your source's words. Too many quotes can overwhelm your readers and cause them to gloss over the page.

After integrating quotes into your work, it is crucial to dissect them for your readers, enabling them to grasp the message conveyed and recognize its significance in supporting your argument. Analyzing quotations goes beyond simply incorporating them into your writing; it involves unpacking their significance to your argument. Consider the quotation's context, tone, and implications. Interpreting your quotation within the framework of your argument allows you to strengthen your persuasiveness and enhance the overall clarity and credibility of your work.

Example

A student finds a very helpful quote while conducting her research. She could paraphrase the passage, but she thinks the quote is too important and cannot be restated any other way while retaining the same impact. She knows she cannot just drop the quote into the middle of her paragraph, so she writes around the quote, introducing its context and following it up with some thoughtful analysis.

- Introduction of the quote: *Following a study in which researchers used adverse childhood experience questionnaires, they were able to validate the role that childhood trauma has on individuals' mental health.*
- Quote: *They found that "children who were physically and verbally abused, particularly those who also witnessed violence against their mother, reported significantly more anxiety, depression, and poor role functioning due to emotional problems as adults. They also reported having fewer supportive and more negative social networks as adults" (Schneider et al., 2020).*
- Analysis: *The researchers uncovered meaningful support for the connection between childhood trauma and later psychological functioning through their study.*

Tips

1. Select with precision and purpose: Choose quotations that align with your argument and provide substantial support; prioritize *relevance* and *applicability* to your context.
2. Introduce seamlessly: Segue quotations smoothly into your writing, ensuring they flow naturally within the structure of your sentences.
3. Analyze with depth: After incorporating quotes, take the time to dissect their significance and relevance to your argument.

Works Consulted

"Academic Guide for Students: How to Put a Quote in an Essay." *Nerdify*. 14 Jan 2019.

<https://nerdify.medium.com/academic-guide-for-students-how-to-put-a-quote-in-an-essay-cbbda3a8b0a4>

Tran, Lisa. "How to Embed Quotes in Your Essay Like a Boss." *Lisa's Study Guides*. 30 Dec 2020.

<https://www.vcestudyguides.com/blog/how-to-embed-quotes-in-your-essay-like-a-boss>

University Writing and Speaking Center. "Quote Integration." *University of Nevada, Reno*.

<https://www.unr.edu/writing-speaking-center/writing-speaking-resources/quote-integration>