

QUOTING CHEAT SHEET

PURPOSE OF QUOTING

Quoting a source's words in your paper can help reinforce your point, lend your argument credibility, or beautify your essay. However, how you quote matters because a lack of or incorrect citations for quotes is plagiarism, and misrepresenting your source by improperly editing their words is dishonest. This handout offers basic guidelines for when to quote and how to do it properly.

WHEN TO QUOTE

Not all references to a source need to be quotes. Paraphrasing a source's idea is perfectly acceptable as long as you still give them credit for the idea by citing it. Many of the references in your paper will likely be summaries or paraphrases. However, it is best to quote when the source has already said what you want to say so well that you can't think of a better way to say it. A good rule of thumb is to have at least one quote per paragraph.

SHORT/RUN-IN QUOTES

Run-in quotes are relatively short quotes incorporated into your text and set off by quotation marks. Most of your quotes will likely be run-ins. Put most closing punctuation inside the closing quotation marks unless a citation follows the quote. All quotes require you credit the original author either with a lead-in in your text or an in-text citation.

Note: Quotation marks are used only for direct quotations from a source — not for summaries or paraphrases.

- ◆ Start the quotation marks before the first quoted word. Close the quotation marks after the last word of the quote but before the citation.
- ◆ If you are quoting a complete sentence, no matter where the quote is in your sentence, keep the first word capitalized as it is in the source. If just quoting part of a sentence, don't capitalize the first word.

EXAMPLES

Disney's mission is "to entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling" ("About").

"The best part," according to Wright, "is that we're making the world a better place" (93).

Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 begins: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

My mother always follows the adage that "a penny saved is a penny earned"; to me, it seems more like "a penny saved is effort wasted."

QUOTE WITHIN A QUOTE

If you are quoting a sentence that already contains a quote, put the inner quote in apostrophes.

EXAMPLES

Correct: "This is further proof of Aristotle's claim that 'The law is reason free from passion'" (Levy 18).

ELLIPSES IN QUOTES

If you start or end a quote in the middle of a source's sentence, do not add an ellipsis inside the quotation marks to indicate you left out part of the sentence. Only use ellipses when cutting out something from the middle of a source's sentence.

EXAMPLES

Full quote: "In some rare cases, study participants exhibited symptoms which, if not treated immediately, could have been fatal" (Avery 16).

Incorrect: Dr. Avery notes that some "...study participants exhibited symptoms which, if not treated immediately, could have been fatal" (16).

Correct: Dr. Avery notes that some "study participants exhibited symptoms which... could have been fatal" (16).

BLOCK QUOTES

A block quote is a long quote set off on separate lines from the rest of your paragraph. This helps readers easily distinguish the quote's words from your words and not get lost in the middle. Block quotes are formatted differently than shorter quotes — they don't use quotation marks, and citations comes after the closing punctuation instead of before. Also, all lines of a block quote should be indented a half inch and double-spaced. Different formatting styles have different rules for what constitutes a block quote.

Major style guides' criteria for block quotes:

MLA style

- ◆ Use a block format for a prose quote that takes up 4 or more lines of your text.
- ◆ Use a block quote for 4 or more lines of poetry.

APA style

- ◆ Use a block format for a quote of 40 words or more.

Chicago style

- ◆ Use a block format for a prose quote of 100 words or more.
- ◆ Use a block quote for 2 or more lines of poetry.

Note: For all these styles, block quotes omit quotation marks, and the closing punctuation comes before the citation.

BLOCK QUOTE EXAMPLE

Philippians 2 lays out how Paul wants the members of the church in Philippi to treat each other — that is, with the humility of Christ. Paul writes:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11, ESV)

In this section, Paul paints a picture of Christ as a paradoxical person. Jesus is both a self-humiliating servant and someone equal with God.