

Integrating Quotes

When you write an essay or research paper, quotes, either from a novel, interview, or research source, form an integral part of the support for your thesis statement. Here are a few rules to remember when integrating quotes:

1. Make certain that the quote illustrates your point.
2. Use only as much of the quote as is absolutely necessary to support your idea. Remember that your analysis of the quote's significance is as important, and often more important, than the quote itself.
3. Use a signal phrase to introduce your quote. This gives the reader some context for the quote and preserves the flow of your paper. A quote that has no signal phrase is often referred to as a "dropped quote." Avoid these!
4. Always remember to cite your source and be consistent in how you do this. The examples on this sheet are taken from the MLA handbook, which is one style of documentation.

Words to Use in Signal Phrases to Vary Your Language:

acknowledges	comments	endorses	reasons
adds	compares	grants	refutes
admits	confirms	illustrates	rejects
agrees	contends	implies	reports
argues	declares	insists	responds
asserts	denies	notes	suggests
believes	disputes	observes	thinks
claims	emphasizes	points out	writes

Other Words to Use in Signal Phrases (better suited for literary essays)

demonstrates	portrays	signifies	shows
highlights	underscores	depicts	develops
expresses	establishes	reflects	explains

Three Ways to Integrate Quotes

1. Quotation With Signal Phrase

According to ornithologist Jay Sheppard, "The bald eagle seems to have stabilized its population" (96).

Ornithologist Jay Sheppard explains, "Although the bald eagles' numbers appear stable, it is still endangered" (97).

Some ornithologists argue, "We must reduce the eagles' habitat loss" (Sheppard 96-97).

2. Use a complete sentence as your signal phrase, followed by a full colon that leads into your quote.

Psychologist H.S. Terrace offers an odd argument for this theory: "Scientists believe that the universe experienced a period of rapid expansion" (Doe 38).

Terrace answers these objections with the following analysis: "..."

3. Borrow only a phrase or a few words from a quote to weave into your own sentence.

Brian Millsap claims that the banning of DDT in 1972 was "the major turning point" leading to the eagles' comeback (2).

Later in the novel Esteban boasts that "Pedro Garcia is dead" (Allende 215). This shows the "unnecessary brutality" that is part of Esteban's character (Allende 57).

Helpful Punctuation to Use When Integrating Quotations

1. The Elipsis Mark

To condense a quoted passage, you can use the ellipsis mark (three periods, with spaces between) to indicate that you have omitted words. The sentence that remains must be grammatically complete.

Erik Eckolm reports that "a 4-year-old pygmy chimpanzee...has demonstrated what scientists say are the most human-like linguistic skills ever documented in another animal" (34).

Note: When you want to omit a full sentence or more, use a period before the three ellipsis dots.

2. Brackets

Brackets (square parentheses) allow you to insert words of your own into quoted material, perhaps to explain a confusing reference or to keep a sentence grammatical in your context.

Robert Seyfarth reports that "Premack [a scientists at the University of Pennsylvania] taught a seven-year-old chimpanzee, Sarah, that the word for 'apple' was a small, plastic triangle" (13).

Integrating Quotes: A Review

When you write an analytical essay, it is usually best to avoid "the dropped quote." Dropped quotes occur when one inserts a quote into a paragraph without leading into it and / or establishing context for it.

Here are three ways to integrate quotes into your writing:

1. Use a signal phrase that **IS NOT** a complete sentence followed by a comma and then the quote:

Fugard shows the change in Hally's attitude toward Sam and Willy when Hally tells him, "Just get on with your bloody work and shut up" (53).

Hally shows evidence of his father's racism in himself when he says to Sam, "Just get on with your bloody work and shut up" (Fugard 53).

2. Use a signal phrase **THAT IS** a complete thought followed by a full colon and then the quote:

Hally begins to reveal ugly evidence of racism within himself: "All that concerns you in here, Sam, is to try and do what you get paid for- keep the place clean and serve the customers" (Fugard 53). This quote shows how...

Fugard uses ballroom dancing as a symbol of Sam's vision of a utopian world: "To be one of those finalists on that dance floor is like...like being in a dream about a world in which accidents don't happen" (45).

3. Use a bit of a quote in your own sentences:

To Sam, ballroom dancing is like "being in a dream about a world in which accidents don't happen (Fugard 45).

Sam decides to show Hally his "nigger's arse" to make Hally realize the despicable nature of the joke he told (Fugard 55).

Sam made the kite for Hally because he wanted him "to look up, to be proud of something" (Fugard 58). This is another instance when looking up symbolizes....

BLENDING QUOTATIONS

Integrate material by using quotation marks.

Sometimes you will use short quotations from your author to illustrate your ideas and interpretations. Here the idea is to distinguish your thoughts from the author's. For this purpose, use quotation marks.

Example: Within him, the force of love operates so strongly that Smirnov would even claim happiness at being shot by Mrs. Popov's "little velvet hands" (140).

Blend quotations into your own sentences:

Using internal quotations creates the problem of blending materials, for quotations should never be brought in unless you prepare your reader for them.

Incorrect: Alexander Pope's pastoral sky is darkened by thick clouds, bringing a feeling of gloom that is associated with the same feeling that can be sensed at a funeral. "See gloomy clouds obscure the cheerful day." (123)

Correct: Alexander Pope's pastoral scene is marked by sorrow and depression, as though the spectator, who is asked to "see gloomy clouds obscure the cheerful day," is present at the funeral (123). *This type of blending works with shorter quotations.*

Write a sentence below that correctly blends a short quotation in your text.