



Integrating Quotations

A quotation is a reference or citation to a source. A direct quotation uses the exact words of a source and must be identified in your paper with quotation marks and parenthetical documentation. Even a single significant word taken from a source must be quoted.

General Instructions

Keep quotations to a minimum: a short phrase or sentence is more emphatic than a long quotation.

- . Look for the "kernel" or the most important part of the quotation, and extract it.
- . Paraphrase a portion of the quotation in your own language when possible.

Overusing quotations can result in "patchwork" writing, a jumble of miscellaneous information from various sources that is merely pieced together. Quotations should fit logically into **your** text; **you** assert control over **your topic** by integrating quotations that help support **your point**. Do not allow quotations (or any source material for that matter) to control the presentation of your paper.

Discussion

We will use the following passage for discussion.:

NOTE: For discussion purposes, all documentation in this handout is in MLA format. Consult your instructor for the specific format required in your class.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Jefferson, Thomas. "The Declaration of Independence." Rpt. in *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*.

Eds. Sylvan Barnet & Hugo Bedau. Boston: Bedford, 1990. 460-463.

Synthesizing Quotations

Use an "action" verb to attribute your source material to the original author. Here are some examples:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <i>suggests</i> | <i>argues</i> | <i>supports</i> | <i>expresses</i> |
| <i>refers</i> | <i>criticizes</i> | <i>insists</i> | <i>explains</i> |
| <i>acknowledges</i> | <i>considers</i> | <i>writes</i> | <i>asks</i> |
| <i>points out</i> | <i>defends</i> | <i>states</i> | <i>speculates</i> |
| <i>concludes</i> | <i>asserts</i> | <i>remarks</i> | <i>insists</i> |

For more information, please see the 4th ed. *The Brief Handbook* pages 116-118 and 164 to 175.

You can also visit <http://kirsznermandell.wadsworth.com> for additional help.

<http://www.usca.edu/writingroom>

Examples

Does not synthesize quotation (needs revision):

Thomas Jefferson believed that there were certain rights that could not be taken away. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Jefferson 461).

Attribution precedes quoted material (mediocre):

In the *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson claims, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (461).

Using *that* (source material as noun clause) (mediocre):

In the *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson claims that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Jefferson 461).

Attribution inserted into quoted material (mediocre):

“We hold these truths to be self-evident,” Jefferson asserts in the *Declaration of Independence*, “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Jefferson 461).

Introducing material with some paraphrase (good):

Jefferson opens the Declaration of Independence asserting that all people are guaranteed specific rights, including “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Jefferson 461).

Final Reminders:

- . Do not quote when a paraphrase or summary will do.
- . Always provide a context for your quotations.
- . Always attribute your quotations to the original author.