GRADUATE STUDENT WRITING WORKSHOP

How and Why we Cite and Quote

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In this session, we'll examine the role of citation and quotation in scholarly work, discuss guidelines for deciding when you need to cite and how to do it, and address the topic of plagiarism.

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Using Sources Effectively

> **Note:** Whether you're paraphrasing or quoting directly from a source, you must ALWAYS cite your source using a standard citation style. The examples presented here are in APA style. **For detailed information about APA, MLA, and other citation styles, please see the citation section of the Effective Writing website.**

How should I use sources in my writing?

- *Sciences* – In the sciences, generally you should simply cite sources without quoting or mentioning them explicitly as part of your sentences. In both sciences and social sciences, writers typically rely heavily on simple citation when reviewing previous research on a topic (a literature review). Depending on the documentation style you are using, your citation may take the form of a footnote or a parenthetical reference, as shown in the example below:

    Research into distance education has found that students generally prefer courses that include synchronous interaction with other students (Melton & Carter, 2003; Wing, 2002).

- *Social sciences* – In the social sciences, while you will use simple citation some of the time, most of the time when you refer to sources, you should try to mention the writers or researchers explicitly as part of your sentences, as in the following examples (with the explicit attributions underlined):

    <u>Adel and Garretson (2006) note that</u> student writers quote sources much more frequently than published academic writers, perhaps because student writers "give more weight to the words of their authoritative sources" (p. 280).

    <u>According to Adel and Garretson (2006),</u> academic writers in humanities and social sciences refer to (and discuss) sources far more frequently than those in the sciences and engineering.

    Research has found that when excellent student writers in social sciences such as sociology, linguistics, and economics used sources, they relied on simple citations 12% to 25% of the time and used explicit attributions to their sources the rest of the time (Adel & Garretson, 2006).

- *Humanities* – In English literature or religious studies courses, you may be expected to write papers based entirely on the literary or philosophical works you are studying (primary sources). In such cases, you may have to quote frequently from the sources as you analyze them or use passages as evidence to support your own claims. In papers in which you are relying on secondary sources (published research), you should aim for a mix of simple citations and sentences including explicit attributions to your sources, as in the examples provided above.

Should I quote or paraphrase?

As noted above, in the sciences, you should generally avoid quoting from sources. Simply paraphrase information and cite your source. In contrast, in the humanities, you should feel free to quote frequently when analyzing works of literature, philosophical arguments, or religious texts. Most of the time, however, when writing in the humanities or social sciences, a good rule of thumb is to **quote from a source only if the original wording or the source itself is important in some way**. For example, you might want to quote (rather than paraphrase) a source when

- working with primary sources like historical records or policy documents
- writing a paper based on interview or survey research in order to let the participants speak in their own words
- defining key analytical terms, particularly when not all sources agree on a definition
- an idea is expressed in a particularly insightful or memorable way in the source.

Adel and Garretson (2006) found that top-performing student writers in the social sciences tended to quote only 10% to 20% of the time when using sources and to paraphrase the rest of the time.

How should I handle quotations?

Quoting can be a tricky business. A bit of advice for quoting effectively is provided below. For detailed information about formatting, punctuating, and citing quotations and constructing a reference list in APA, MLA, or other formats, please see the resources in the citation section of the Effective Writing website.

Formatting quotations

- Use quotation marks "like this" around words taken from a source. If a quotation is over 40 words (in APA style) or four typed lines (in MLA style), present the passage in double-spaced inset block format without quotation marks, and cite your source. Note that even if you cite your source, failure to use quotation marks (or inset block format) for borrowed wording constitutes plagiarism.

- Cite a page number for all quotations.

Length & clarity.

- Quote only as much as you need to. Use ellipsis (three spaced dots) to signal the omission of words or sentences when quoting. Add a fourth dot if the ellipsis runs over the end of a sentence (as in the Halloran example below). No ellipsis is needed at the beginning of a quoted passage. In MLA (but not APA) format, ellipsis is needed if a quotation ends in an incomplete sentence.

- Use square brackets [like this] around words inserted for clarity into a quoted passage, (e.g., "She [John's mother] was a difficult woman" (p. 10).)

Style & substance.

- Generally avoid using a quoted passage to begin a sentence. Instead, provide a lead-in for your quotations (e.g., by making clear who is speaking).

- When using a long inset quotation, try to introduce it with what could be a complete sentence followed by a colon. Here's an example (in APA format):

  As Halloran (1990) notes, correct grammar has long been associated with social class:
  > *In the competitive middle-class society of the nineteenth-century, speaking and writing and writing "correct" English took on new importance as a sign of membership in the upper strata. . . . [B]y attempting to impose a "hyper-correct" dialect on the generally privileged students at Harvard and the other established liberal arts colleges, Hill and others may actually have strengthened the linguistic obstacles to upward mobility. (p. 167)*

- When using a long inset quotation, try to end your sentence with the quotation.

- When revising, make sure that you've adequately established the significance of quoted material and that the material actually supports the point you are making in your paragraph.

What verb tense should I use?

Use the **past tense** when referring to a researcher's activity, even if the research is recent.

  e.g. Soo (2007) <u>investigated</u> the link between gender and income among social workers and <u>found</u>…

  The link between gender and income . . . <u>was investigated</u> by Soo (2007).

Use **present perfect tense** (*has/have + the past participle of the verb*) when referring to topics of research rather than to a specific researcher's activity.

  e.g. The experiences of abused women <u>have been investigated</u> (Davis & Srinivasan, 1997).

  Several studies <u>have focused</u> on learning styles (e.g., Lea, 1998; Neff, 1998; Song, 2003).

Use **present tense** when making general statements about reality (as supported by research) and when presenting actions, events, and quoted passages from works of literature.

  e.g. Spousal abuse <u>appears</u> to have a complex set of causes (Davis & Srinivasan, 1997).

  Jane initially <u>sees</u> Emily as a friend but later <u>comes</u> to view her as a competitor.

What are some lead-ins that I can use to refer to sources in my sentences?

Here are a few lead-ins (or verbs of attribution) that you might find useful in your papers:

according to	concluded	emphasized	interpreted	provided	suggested
acknowledged	confirmed	established	investigated	proved (avoid)	supported
assessed	considered	examined		questioned	surveyed
assumed	contended that	extended...to	listed	quoted (avoid)	
argued	continued	explained	located		tested
agreed	contradicted	explored	maintained	recommended	theorized
asserted	correlated...	evaluated	meant	recognized	took the view
attributed... to	critiqued		mentioned	related .... to ...	that
attempted to	criticized	felt		reported	thought
analyzed		focused on	neglected	revealed	traced
	defined	found	noted	reviewed	
believed	demonstrated		observed		underscored
	described	highlighted	outlined	saw … as	underlined
called	determined	hypothesized		said	used
cited	developed		pointed out	showed	
challenged	disagreed	identified	posited	stated	verified
claimed	discovered	ignored	presented	stressed	viewed
compared	discussed	insisted	proposed	studied	wrote

In Table 1, the verbs highlighted were found to be among those most frequently used in good student writing (Adel & Garretson, 2006).

Here are a few pitfalls to watch out for when referring to sources:

- Avoid using "proved" when writing in the humanities and social sciences; instead, try verbs like "found," "demonstrated," or "established." In the sciences, "proved" may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g., when referring to foundational research), but it should be used with restraint.

- When referring to sources, aim for precision and variety. Avoid overusing "said" and "stated." Consider the distinctions between *noting, proposing, arguing for*, and *claiming* something.

- When referring to researchers, avoid using the verbs "felt" and "thought." Instead, use stronger verbs, like "found" or "concluded." The verbs "felt" and "thought" may be appropriate if you are referring to the experiences of research participants.

- Unless you are saying that one writer actually used the words of another writer, avoid using the verb "quoted" when referring to a source or introducing a quotation.

- Watch out for anthropomorphism—illogically using verbs that require a human subject with inanimate objects. For example, keep in mind that a study cannot conclude something or control for variables; only researchers can do those actions.

References

Adel, A., & Garretson, G. (2006, September). *Citation practices across the disciplines: The case of proficient student writing.* Paper presented at the conference of The European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes, Zaragoza, Spain.

Halloran, S. M. (1990). From rhetoric to composition: The teaching of writing in America to 1900. In J. J. Murphy (Ed.), *A short history of writing instruction from ancient Greece to twentieth-century America* (pp. 151-182). Davis CA: Hermagoras Press.

CITATIONS, QUOTATIONS AND PLAGIARISM

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WHY WE CITE: THE PURPOSES OF CITATION

Quality academic writing is built upon the work of others, to which we add our own unique analysis and contributions. Citations serve three major roles in scholarly work:

- They allow you to show how your argument is built upon the ideas of others.
- They allow you to indicate *which* ideas are taken from others, and from whom those ideas were taken; in other words, to give credit where it's due.
- They allow the interested reader to follow your argument and confirm its logic by investigating the ideas on which the argument is built, or to further explore those ideas on their own.

In each case, it's important that you acknowledge the ways in which others' ideas contributed to your own. To fail to distinguish our original ideas from those of our forebears is plagiarism (see below).

What Needs to be Cited?

If you incorporate or refer to others' theories, words, ideas or concepts in a paper or project, you must document each one using a citation. The use of facts and statistics that another has compiled must also be likewise acknowledged.

You need to document:

- Direct quotes, both entire sentences and phrases
- Paraphrases (rephrased or summarized material)
- Words or terminology specific to or unique to the author's research, theories, or ideas
- Use of an author's argument or line of thinking
- Historical, statistical, or scientific facts
- Graphs, drawings, or other such aggregations of information or data
- Articles or studies you refer to within your text

You do **not** need to document:

- Proverbs, axioms, and sayings ("A stitch in time saves nine.")
- Well-known quotations ("Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.")
- Common knowledge (Thomas Edison invented the phonograph; "Starry Night" was painted by Vincent Van Gogh; Oxygen has the atomic number 8)

Sometimes it can be difficult to be sure what counts as common knowledge. A good rule of thumb is to ask yourself if a knowledgeable reader would be familiar with the information in question. If he or she would have to look it up to confirm it, you should usually document it. If you're not sure, document it to play it safe.

QUOTATIONS

Used effectively, quotations can provide important pieces of evidence and lend fresh voices and perspectives to your narrative. Used ineffectively, however, quotations clutter your text and interrupt the flow of your argument. This handout will help you decide when and how to quote like a pro.

WHEN SHOULD I QUOTE?

Use quotations at strategically selected moments. You have probably been told by teachers to provide as much evidence as possible in support of your thesis. But packing your paper with quotations will not necessarily strengthen your argument. The majority of your paper should still be your original ideas in your own words (after all, it's your paper). And quotations are only one type of evidence: well-balanced papers may also make use of paraphrases, data, and statistics. The types of evidence you use will depend in part on the conventions of the discipline or audience for which you are writing. For example, papers analyzing literature may rely heavily on direct quotations of the text, while papers in the social sciences may have more paraphrasing, data, and statistics than quotations.

1. Discussing specific arguments or ideas.

Sometimes, in order to have a clear, accurate discussion of the ideas of others, you need to quote those ideas word for word. Suppose you want to challenge the following statement made by John Doe, a well-known historian:

"At the beginning of World War Two, almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly."

If it is especially important that you formulate a counterargument to this claim, then you might wish to quote the part of the statement that you find questionable and establish a dialogue between yourself and John Doe:

Historian John Doe has argued that in 1941 "almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly" (Doe 223). Yet during the first six months of U.S. involvement, the wives and mothers of soldiers often noted in their diaries their fear that the war would drag on for years.

2. Giving added emphasis to a particularly authoritative source on your topic.

There will be times when you want to highlight the words of a particularly important and authoritative source on your topic. For example, suppose you were writing an essay about the differences between the lives of male and female slaves in the U.S. South. One of your most provocative sources is a narrative written by a former slave, Harriet Jacobs. It would then be appropriate to quote some of Jacobs's words:

Harriet Jacobs, a former slave from North Carolina, published an autobiographical slave narrative in 1861. She exposed the hardships of both male and female slaves but ultimately concluded that "slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women."

In this particular example, Jacobs is providing a crucial first-hand perspective on slavery. Thus, her words deserve more exposure than a paraphrase could provide.

Jacobs is quoted in Harriet A. Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

3. Analyzing how others use language.

This scenario is probably most common in literature and linguistics courses, but you might also find yourself writing about the use of language in history and social science classes. If the use of language is your primary topic, then you will obviously need to quote users of that language.

Examples of topics that might require the frequent use of quotations include:

Southern colloquial expressions in William Faulkner's Light in August

Ms. and the creation of a language of female empowerment

A comparison of three British poets and their use of rhyme

4. Spicing up your prose.

In order to lend variety to your prose, you may wish to quote a source with particularly vivid language. All quotations, however, must closely relate to your topic and arguments. Do not insert a quotation solely for its literary merits.

One example of a quotation that adds flair:

Calvin Coolidge's tendency to fall asleep became legendary. As H. L. Mencken commented in the American Mercury in 1933, "Nero fiddled, but Coolidge only snored."

HOW DO I SET UP AND FOLLOW UP A QUOTATION?

Once you've carefully selected the quotations that you want to use, your next job is to weave those quotations into your text. The words that precede and follow a quotation are just as important as the quotation itself. You can think of each quote as the filling in a sandwich: it may be tasty on its own, but it's messy to eat without some bread on either side of it. Your words can serve as the "bread" that helps readers digest each quote easily. Below are four guidelines for setting up and following up quotations.

In illustrating these four steps, we'll use as our example, Franklin Roosevelt's famous quotation, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

1. Provide a context for each quotation.

Do not rely on quotations to tell your story for you. It is your responsibility to provide your reader with a context for the quotation. The context should set the basic scene for when,

possibly where, and under what circumstances the quotation was spoken or written. So, in providing a context for our above example, you might write:

When Franklin Roosevelt gave his inaugural speech on March 4, 1933, he addressed a nation weakened and demoralized by economic depression.

2. Attribute each quotation to its source.

Tell your reader who is speaking. Here is a good test: try reading your text aloud. Could your reader determine without looking at your paper where your quotations begin? If not, you need to attribute the quote more noticeably.

Avoid getting into the "he/she said" attribution rut! There are many other ways to attribute quotes besides this construction. Here are a few alternative verbs, usually followed by "that":

add remark exclaim announce reply state comment respond estimate

write point out predict argue   suggest propose declare criticize proclaim

note complain opine observe   think   note

Different reporting verbs are preferred by different disciplines, so pay special attention to these in your disciplinary reading. If you're unfamiliar with the meanings of any of these words or others you find in your reading, consult a dictionary before using them.

3. Explain the significance of the quotation.

Once you've inserted your quotation, along with its context and attribution, don't stop! Your reader still needs your assessment of why the quotation holds significance for your paper. Using our Roosevelt example, if you were writing a paper on the first one-hundred days of FDR's administration, you might follow the quotation by linking it to that topic:

With that message of hope and confidence, the new president set the stage for his next one-hundred days in office and helped restore the faith of the American people in their government.

4. Provide a citation for the quotation.

All quotations, just like all paraphrases, require a formal citation. For more details about particular citation formats, see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial. In general, you should remember one rule of thumb: Place the parenthetical reference or footnote/endnote number after—not within—the closed quotation mark.

Roosevelt declared, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (Roosevelt, Public Papers 11).

Roosevelt declared, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."[1]

How do I embed a quote into a sentence?

In general, avoid leaving quotes as sentences unto themselves. Even if you have provided some context for the quote, a quote standing alone can disrupt your flow. Take a look at this example:

Hamlet denies Rosencrantz's claim that thwarted ambition caused his depression. "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space" (*Hamlet* 2.2).

Standing by itself, the quote's connection to the preceding sentence is unclear. There are several ways to incorporate a quote more smoothly.

1) Lead into the quote with a colon.

Hamlet denies Rosencrantz's claim that thwarted ambition caused his depression: "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space" (*Hamlet* 2.2).

The colon announces that a quote will follow to provide evidence for the sentence's claim.

2) Introduce or conclude the quote by attributing it to the speaker. If your attribution precedes the quote, you will need to use a comma after the verb.

Hamlet denies Rosencrantz's claim that thwarted ambition caused his depression. He states, "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space" (*Hamlet* 2.2).

When faced with a twelve-foot mountain troll, Ron gathers his courage, shouting, "*Wingardium Leviosa!"* (Rowling, p. 176).

The Pirate King sees an element of regality in their impoverished and dishonest life. "It is, it is a glorious thing/To be a pirate king," he declares (*Pirates of Penzance*, 1983).

3) Interrupt the quote with an attribution to the speaker. Again, you will need to use a comma after the verb, as well as a comma leading into the attribution.

"There is nothing either good or bad," Hamlet argues, "but thinking makes it so" (*Hamlet* 2.2).

"And death shall be no more," Donne writes, "Death thou shalt die" ("Death, Be Not Proud," l. 14).

Dividing the quote may highlight a particular nuance of the quote's meaning. In the first example, the division calls attention to the two parts of Hamlet's claim. The first phrase states that nothing is inherently good or bad; the second phrase suggests that our perspective causes things to become good or bad. In the second example, the isolation of "Death thou shalt die" at the end of the sentence draws a reader's attention to that phrase in particular. As you decide whether or not you want to break up a quote, you should consider the shift in emphasis that the division might create.

4) Use the words of the quote grammatically within your own sentence.

When Hamlet tells Rosencrantz that he "could be bounded in a nutshell and count [him]self a king of infinite space" (*Hamlet* 2.2), he implies that thwarted ambition did not cause his depression.

Ultimately, death holds no power over Donne since in the afterlife, "death shall be no more" ("Death, Be Not Proud," l. 14).

Note that when you use "that" after the verb that introduces the quote, you no longer need a comma.

The Pirate King argues that "it is, it is a glorious thing/to be a pirate king" (*Pirates of Penzance*, 1983).

How much should I quote?

As few words as possible. Remember, your paper should primarily contain your own words, so quote only the most pithy and memorable parts of sources. Here are three guidelines for selecting quoted material judiciously.

1. Excerpt fragments.

Sometimes, you should quote short fragments, rather than whole sentences. Suppose you interviewed Jane Doe about her reaction to John F. Kennedy's assassination. She commented:

"I couldn't believe it. It was just unreal and so sad. It was just unbelievable. I had never experienced such denial. I don't know why I felt so strongly. Perhaps it was because JFK was more to me than a president. He represented the hopes of young people everywhere."

You could quote all of Jane's comments, but her first three sentences are fairly redundant. You might instead want to quote Jane when she arrives at the ultimate reason for her strong emotions:

Jane Doe grappled with grief and disbelief. She had viewed JFK, not just as a national figurehead, but as someone who "represented the hopes of young people everywhere."

2. Excerpt those fragments carefully!

Quoting the words of others carries a big responsibility. Misquoting misrepresents the ideas of others. Here's a classic example of a misquote:

John Adams has often been quoted as having said: "This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it."

John Adams did, in fact, write the above words. But if you see those words in context, the meaning changes entirely. Here's the rest of the quotation:

Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, 'this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!' But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

As you can see from this example, context matters!

This example is from Paul F. Boller, Jr. and John George, They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions (Oxford University Press, 1989).

3. Use block quotations sparingly.

There may be times when you need to quote long passages. However, you should use block quotations only when you fear that omitting any words will destroy the integrity of the passage. If that passage exceeds four lines (some sources say five), then set it off as a block quotation.

Here are a few general tips for setting off your block quotation—to be sure you are handling block quotes correctly in papers for different academic disciplines, check the index of the citation style guide you are using:

1. Set up a block quotation with your own words followed by a colon.
2. Indent. You normally indent 4-5 spaces for the start of a paragraph. When setting up a block quotation, indent the entire paragraph once from the left-hand margin.
3. Single space or double space within the block quotation, depending on the style guidelines of your discipline (MLA, CSE, APA, Chicago, etc.).
4. Do not use quotation marks at the beginning or end of the block quote—the indentation is what indicates that it's a quote.
5. Place parenthetical citation according to your style guide (usually after the period following the last sentence of the quote).
6. Follow up a block quotation with your own words.

So, using the above example from John Adams, here's how you might include a block quotation:

After reading several doctrinally rigid tracts, John Adams recalled the zealous ranting of his former teacher, Joseph Cleverly, and minister, Lemuel Bryant. He expressed his ambivalence toward religion in an 1817 letter to Thomas Jefferson:

> Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, 'this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!' But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

Adams clearly appreciated religion, even if he often questioned its promotion.

How do I combine quotation marks with other punctuation marks?

It can be confusing when you start combining quotation marks with other punctuation marks. You should consult a style manual for complicated situations, but the following two rules apply to most cases:

1) Keep periods and commas within quotation marks.

So, for example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln "feared the spread of slavery," but many of his aides advised him to "watch and wait."

In the above example, both the comma and period were enclosed in the quotation marks. The main exception to this rule involves the use of internal citations, which always precede the last period of the sentence. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln "feared the spread of slavery," but many of his aides advised him to "watch and wait" (Jones 143).

Note, however, that the period remains inside the quotation marks when your citation style involved superscript footnotes or endnotes. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln "feared the spread of slavery," but many of his aides advised him to "watch and wait."[2]

2) Place all other punctuation marks (colons, semicolons, exclamation marks, question marks) outside the quotation marks, except when they were part of the original quotation.

Take a look at the following examples:

The student wrote that the U. S. Civil War "finally ended around 1900"!

The coach yelled, "Run!"

In the first example, the author placed the exclamation point outside the quotation mark because she added it herself to emphasize the absurdity of the student's comment. The student's original comment had not included an exclamation mark. In the second example, the exclamation mark remains within the quotation mark because it is indicating the excited tone in which the coach yelled the command. Thus, the exclamation mark is considered to be part of the original quotation.

How do I indicate quotations within quotations?

If you are quoting a passage that contains a quotation, then you use single quotation marks for the internal quotation. Quite rarely, you quote a passage that has a quotation within a

quotation. In that rare instance, you would use double quotation marks for the second internal quotation.

Here's an example of a quotation within a quotation:

In "The Emperor's New Clothes," Hans Christian Andersen wrote, "'But the Emperor has nothing on at all!' cried a little child."

Remember to consult your style guide to determine how to properly cite a quote within a quote.

When do I use those three dots (. . .)?

Whenever you want to leave out material from within a quotation, you need to use an ellipsis, which is a series of three periods, each of which should be preceded and followed by a space. So, an ellipsis in this sentence would look like . . . this. There are a few rules to follow when using ellipses:

1. Be sure that you don't fundamentally change the meaning of the quotation by omitting material.

Take a look at the following example:

"The Writing Center is located on the U of C campus and serves the entire U of C community."

"The Writing Center . . . serves the entire U of C community."

The reader's understanding of the Writing Center's mission to serve the U of C community is not affected by omitting the information about its location.

2. Do not use ellipses at the beginning or ending of quotations, unless it's important for the reader to know that the quotation was truncated.

For example, using the above example, you would NOT need an ellipsis in either of these situations:

"The Writing Center is located on the U of C campus . . ."

The Writing Center " . . . serves the entire U of C community."

3. Use punctuation marks in combination with ellipses when removing material from the end of sentences or clauses.

For example, if you take material from the end of a sentence, keep the period in as usual.

"The boys ran to school, forgetting their lunches and books. Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time."

"The boys ran to school. . . . Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time."

Likewise, if you excerpt material at the end of clause that ends in a comma, retain the comma.

"The red car came to a screeching halt that was heard by nearby pedestrians, but no one was hurt."

"The red car came to a screeching halt . . . , but no one was hurt."

Is it ever okay to insert my own words or change words in a quotation?

Sometimes it is necessary for clarity and flow to alter a word or words within a quotation. You should make such changes rarely. In order to alert your reader to the changes you've made, you should always bracket the altered words. Here are a few examples of situations when you might need brackets.

1. Changing verb tense or pronouns in order to be consistent with the rest of the sentence.

Suppose you were quoting a woman who, when asked about her experiences immigrating to the United States, commented "nobody understood me." You might write:

Esther Hansen felt that when she came to the United States "nobody understood [her]."

In the above example, you've changed "me" to "her" in order to keep the entire passage in third person. However, you could avoid the need for this change by simply rephrasing:

"Nobody understood me," recalled Danish immigrant Esther Hansen.

2. Including supplemental information that your reader needs in order to understand the quotation.

For example, if you were quoting someone's nickname, you might want to let your reader know the full name of that person in brackets.

"The principal of the school told Billy [William Smith] that his contract would be terminated."

Similarly, if a quotation referenced an event with which the reader might be unfamiliar, you could identify that event in brackets.

"We completely revised our political strategies after the strike [of 1934]."

3. Indicating the use of nonstandard grammar or spelling.

In rare situations, you may quote from a text that has nonstandard grammar, spelling, or word choice. In such cases, you may want to insert [*sic*], which means "thus" or "so" in Latin. Using [*sic*] alerts your reader to the fact that this nonstandard language is not the result of a typo on your part. Always italicize "*sic*" and enclose it in brackets. There is no need to put a period at the end. Here's an example of when you might use [*sic*]:

Twelve-year-old Betsy Smith wrote in her diary, "Father is afraid that he will be guilty of beach [*sic*] of contract."

Here [*sic*] indicates that the original author wrote "beach of contract," not breach of contract, which is the accepted terminology.

4. Do not overuse brackets!

For example, it is not necessary to bracket capitalization changes that you make at the beginning of sentences. For example, suppose you were going to use part of this quotation:

"We never looked back, but the memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives."

If you wanted to begin a sentence with an excerpt from the middle of this quotation, there would be no need to bracket your capitalization changes.

"The memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives," commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.

Not

"[T]he memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives," commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.

PLAGIARISM

What is plagiarism?

At the U of C, the definition of Plagiarism is as follows:

"1. **Plagiarism** - Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work as if it were the student's own work when it is not. Any ideas or materials taken from another source written, electronic, or oral must be fully and formally acknowledged." The complete definition of plagiarism can be found at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html

Because it is considered a form of cheating, a student who is found guilty of plagiarism may receive a failing grade in the exercise or course, be suspended or expulsed from the faculty or university. Full information can be found at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-2.html

Why are my instructors so concerned about plagiarism?

In order to understand plagiarism, it helps to understand the process of sharing and creating ideas in the university. All knowledge is built from previous knowledge. As we read, study, perform experiments, and gather perspectives, we are drawing on other people's ideas. Building on their ideas and experiences, we create our own. When you put your ideas on

paper, your instructors want to distinguish between the building block ideas borrowed from other people and your own newly reasoned perspectives or conclusions. You make these distinctions in a written paper by citing the sources for your building block ideas. Providing appropriate citations will also help readers who are interested in your topic find additional, related material to read—in this way, they will be able to build on the work you have done to find sources.

Think of it this way: in the vast majority of assignments you'll get in college, your instructors will ask you to *read* something (think of this material as the building blocks) and then write a paper in which you *analyze* one or more aspects of what you have read (think of this as the new structure you build). Essentially, your instructors are asking you to do three things:

- Show that you have a clear understanding of the material you've read.
- Refer to your sources to support the ideas you have developed.
- Distinguish *your* analysis of what you've read from the authors' analyses.

When you cite a source, you are using an expert's ideas as proof or evidence of a new idea that you are trying to communicate to the reader.

What about "common knowledge"?

In every professional field, experts consider some ideas "common knowledge," but remember that you're not a professional (yet). In fact, you're just learning about those concepts in the course you're taking, so the material you are reading may not yet be "common knowledge" to you. In order to decide if the material you want to use in your paper constitutes "common knowledge," you may find it helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I know this information before I took this course?
- Did this information/idea come from my own brain?

If you answer "no" to either or both of these questions, then the information is not "common knowledge" to you. In these cases, you need to cite your source(s) and indicate where you first learned this bit of what may be "common knowledge" in the field.

What about paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing means taking another person's ideas and putting those ideas in your own words. Paraphrasing does NOT mean changing a word or two in someone else's sentence, changing the sentence structure while maintaining the original words, or changing a few words to synonyms. If you are tempted to rearrange a sentence in any of these ways, you are writing too close to the original. That's plagiarizing, not paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing is a fine way to use another person's ideas to support your argument as long as you attribute the material to the author and cite the source in the text at the end of the sentence. In order to make sure you are paraphrasing in the first place, take notes from your reading *with the book closed*. Doing so will make it easier to put the ideas in your own words. When you are unsure if you are writing too close to the original, check with your instructor

BEFORE you turn in the paper for a grade. So, just to be clear—do you need to cite when you paraphrase? Yes, you do!

How can I avoid plagiarizing?

Now that you understand what plagiarism is, you're ready to employ the following three simple steps to avoid plagiarizing in your written work.

Step 1: Accentuate the positive. Change your attitude about using citations.

Do you feel that you use too many citations? Too few? Many students worry that if they use too many citations their instructors will think that they're relying too heavily on the source material and therefore not thinking for themselves. In fact, however, using citations allows you to demonstrate clearly how well you understand the course material while *also* making clear distinctions between what the authors have to say and your analysis of their ideas.

Thus, rather than making your paper look less intellectually sophisticated, using citations allows you to show off your understanding of the material and the assignment. And instead of showing what you *don't* know, citing your sources provides evidence of what you *do* know and of the *authority* behind your knowledge. Just make sure that your paper has a point, main idea, or thesis that is your own and that you organize the source material around that point.

Are you worried that you have too few citations? Double-check your assignment to see if you have been given any indication of the number or kind of source materials expected. Then share your writing with another reader. Do you have enough evidence or proof to support the ideas you put forward? Why should the reader believe the points you have made? Would adding another, expert voice strengthen your argument? Who else agrees or disagrees with the ideas you have written? Have you paraphrased ideas that you have read or heard? If so, you need to cite them. Have you referred to or relied on course material to develop your ideas? If so, you need to cite it as well.

Step 2: How can I keep track of all this information? Improve your note-taking skills.

Once you've reconsidered your position on using citations, you need to rethink your note-taking practices. Taking careful notes is simply the best way to avoid plagiarism. And improving your note-taking skills will also allow you to refine your critical thinking skills. Here's how the process works:

(1) Start by carefully noting all the bibliographic information you'll need for your works cited page. (See #3 for more details on how to determine exactly what information you'll need for different kinds of sources.) If you're photocopying an article or section out of a book or journal, why not photocopy the front pages of the source as well? That way you'll have the bibliographic information if you need it later. If you forget to gather the information for a book, you can usually get it from the library's online card catalogue. Simply pull up the entry for the book you used to see the bibliographic information on that source. If you're working on an article from a journal, you can return to the database from which you got the original citation to find the bibliographic information.

(2) Next, try thinking about your notes as a kind of transitional space between what you've read and what you're preparing to write. Imagine yourself having a conversation with the author of the story/novel/play/poem/article/book you're reading, in which you repeatedly ask yourself the following questions:

- *What* is the author trying to explain?
- *Why* does s/he think these points are important?
- *How* has s/he decided to construct the argument?
- *How* does the structure of the argument affect the reader's response to the author's ideas?
- How *effective* is the author's argument?

Adopting this "conversational" approach to note-taking will improve your analysis of the material by leading you to notice not just what the author says, but also *how* and *why* the author communicates his or her ideas. This strategy will also help you avoid the very common temptation of thinking that the author's way of explaining something is much better than anything you could write. If you are tempted to borrow the author's language, write your notes *with the book closed* to ensure that you are putting the ideas into your own words. If you've already taken a step away from the author's words in your notes, you'll find it easier to use your own words in the paper you write.

(3) Finally, be careful to use quotation marks to distinguish the exact words used by the author from your own words so that when you return to your notes later in the writing process, you won't have to guess which ideas are yours and which ones came directly from the text. You'll have to experiment with different note-taking techniques until you find the one that works best for you, but here's one example of how your notes might look:

James Leoni, trans. Ten Books on Architecture by Leone Battista Alberti. London: Alec Tirani, Ltd., 1955.

BOOK I, CHAPTER X: "Of the Columns and Walls, and Some Observations Relating to the Columns"

- (p. 14) Alberti begins by talking about walls, and then says a row of columns is simply "a Wall open and discontinued in several Places;" he says the column supports the roof, and that columns are the most beautiful of the architectural elements; here, he'll address what columns have in common, and later he'll discuss their differences.

- (p. 14) all columns rest on a plinth (or dye), which supports a base, which supports the column, which is topped by a capital; columns are usually widest at the base, and taper toward the top; Alberti says the column was invented simply to hold up the roof, but men sought to make their buildings "immortal and eternal," so they embellished columns with architraves, entablatures, etc.

Notice that you can adapt this note-taking strategy to any format—whether you prefer to take notes by hand, on note cards, on your computer, or some other way. For more information on developing an effective note-taking technique, you can consult any grammar handbook. Here are a few particularly helpful ones:

- Leonard J. Rosen and Laurence Behren. The Allyn & Bacon Handbook. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000. OR Allyn & Bacon online at: www.abacon.com
- Joseph Gibaldi. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.
- Kate L. Turabian. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Step 3: So many details, so little time! Locate the appropriate style manual.

Don't worry—no one can remember all the different citation conventions used in all the different university disciplines! Citing your sources appropriately is a matter of:

1. determining which style your instructor wants you to use,
2. finding the appropriate style manual, and
3. copying the "formula" it gives for each type of source you use.

First, carefully read the assignment to determine what citation style your instructor wants you to use (APA, MLA, Chicago, and CSE are the most common). If s/he doesn't specify a citation style in the assignment, check your syllabus, coursepack, and/or Blackboard site. If you can't find the citation style in any of those places, ask your instructor what style s/he prefers. Second, academic citation styles follow specific formats, so making an educated guess about how to structure your citations and works cited page is usually not a good idea. Instead, find the specified style manual in the reference section of the library, on the reference shelf in the Writing Center, or online. Finally, style manuals provide easy-to-follow formulas for your citations. For example, the MLA handbook provides the following format for citing a book by a single author:

Author's name. *Title of the book*. Publication information.

You can use this formula for your own citation by simply plugging in the information called for, following the format of the formula itself. Here's an example of how that might look:

Berlage, Gai Ingham. *Women in Baseball: The Forgotten History.* Westport: Greenwood, 1994.

How can I tell whether I've plagiarized?

If you've followed the above guidelines but still aren't sure whether you've plagiarized, you can double-check your work using the checklist below.

You need to cite your source, even if:
1. you put all direct quotes in quotation marks.
2. you changed the words used by the author into synonyms.
3. you completely paraphrased the ideas to which you referred.
4. your sentence is mostly made up of your own thoughts, but contains a reference to the author's ideas.
5. you mention the author's name in the sentence.

The moral of this handout: When in doubt, give a citation