

<http://nutsandbolts.washcoll.edu/quoting.html>

(Reflects MLA style)

**1. Introduce your quotations.** A quotation should never suddenly appear out of nowhere. Some kind of information about the quotation is needed. Name the author, give his credentials, name the source, give a summary. You won't do all of these each time, but you should usually name the author. For example:

- a. But John Jones disagrees with this point, saying, "Such a product would not sell."
- b. In an article in Time Fred Jackson writes that frogs vary in the degree of shyness they exhibit: "The arboreal tree frogs seem to be especially [ . . . ]."

**2. Discuss your quotations.** Do not quote someone and then leave the words hanging as if they were self explanatory. What does the quotation mean and how does it help establish the point you are making? What is your interpretation or opinion of it? Quotations are like examples: discuss them to show how they fit in with your thesis and with the ideas you are presenting. Remember: quotations support or illustrate your own points. They are not substitutes for your ideas and they do not stand by themselves.

It is often useful to apply some interpretive phrasing after a quotation, to show the reader that the you are explaining the quotation and that it supports your argument:

Here we see that

This statement shows

Clearly, then,

We can conclude from this that

**3. Use some variety in introducing quotations.**

A. Pick the quotation verb which seems in each case to fit your purpose most exactly. For example:

In this essay Green tells us, "Hope increases courage."

Note that the particular verb you choose helps orient your reader toward your opinion of the statement. "Jones says" is neutral; "Jones informs us" is positive, "Jones alleges" is somewhat negative. Other verbs to choose from include:

says	remarks	alleges	thinks
writes	adds	claims	affirms
observes	declares	states	asserts
notes	informs us	comments	explains
argues			

**B. Sometimes you might want to use a colon introduction.**

For example:

Kumquat offers this explanation: "Deep thinkers talk little."

Or Kumquat

is more enlightening:

prefers a different argument:

discerns this point:

distinguishes between the two:

reminds us of his youth:

believes we should talk less:

**C. An introductory phrase may sometimes be best.**

For example:

In the words of Fisher, "Art is a mirror of belief" (342).

As Ted Fisher has remarked, "Life imitates art."

As Fisher reminds us, "Monkey see, monkey do."

**4. Sometimes you might want to begin your quotation in the middle of the writer's sentence.**

For example,

Joe's Text:

I live in the country where life is slow and soft.

Your quotation:

Joe believes that "life is slow and soft" in the country (Living Easy 288).

Or, Boz's Text:

Sally, I love the delicious metaphors you make.

Your quotation:

Boz tells Sally that he loves "the delicious metaphors" she makes (433).

(Note: for embedded phrases like these, do not use ellipsis dots on either side.)

**5. Sometimes leave out some words to condense the quotation. Mid-sentence ellipses use three spaced, bracketed dots.**

Example text:

The surf on the beach at Mazatlan beat against the shore.

Your quotation:

Smith says of his wave watching, "The surf [. . .] beat against the shore" (Jones 788).

Ellipses at the end of sentence use three spaced, bracketed dots and then a period. Example text:

Rule 5 says, "Sometimes you will want to leave out some words [. . .]."

**6. Parenthetical material goes inside the punctuation mark.**

For Example:

The forest is variously described as "marvelous" (34), "fun" (98), and "dramatic" (39).

Compare punctuation without and with parenthetical material:

John records that "all things were made through him [. . .]."

John records that "all things were made through him [. . .]" (John 1:3).

(Note that the period has moved from next to the brackets to behind the right parenthesis mark.)