

Quoting

Why use quotes?

There are several occasions when quotations can be useful. You may find that a point expressed by another author strengthens your point or idea.

The quotation may relate to your ideas or shed light upon them in a striking or memorable way. Another person's words may summarise your ideas very neatly or add to them. The quote may also have been made by a leading author in your field, so using it adds authority to your work.

If you are working on a science based paper it is usually more acceptable to paraphrase rather than quote directly. You must properly acknowledge any work that is not your own.

Just make sure that there is always a reason for quoting. Don't just include big slabs of quotation to fill up the page!

Quoting – what is it?

Quoting is when you copy the exact words from another source into your work. The reader should be able to identify short quotations in your work through the use of quotation marks: "...".

Quotations that are longer than one line are indented, single-spaced, and set apart from the rest of the text by leaving a single-line space before and after the quote (check your referencing style).

Try to keep quotations short whenever possible (no more than 5% of your paper) and don't overuse them. Your ideas should not be overshadowed by another person's.

You must always acknowledge the source of the quotation through careful referencing, both in the text and at the end of your essay or assignment.

Identifying the authors of quotes: some different options

There are several ways to insert quotations into your writing. In this first option the author of the quote is simply placed in brackets at the end of the quotation.

Option A:

"Perth is an isolated city geographically, but contains within its boundaries many different cultures and nationalities" (McGuinness, 56).

Option A allows you to insert the quotation without identifying the authors in the body of your text. Instead, you cite them in parenthetical documentation. This is called the 'information prominent' method of quoting.

Use this method of quoting when the statement or idea is more important than the author.

Identifying the authors of quotes

In the second option you acknowledge the authors by identifying them before the quotation. In this case you only need to provide the page numbers in brackets at the end of the quote. You might use this method when the author is important and you want their name to be noticed.

Option B:

McGuinness writes: "Perth is an isolated city geographically, but contains within its boundaries many different cultures and nationalities" (56).

In Option B you attribute the quotation to the authors by identifying them before the quotation. This is called the 'authorial prominent' method of quoting.

Identifying the authors of quotes

In this third option the author is acknowledged in between two different sections of the quotation. As with the previous example, only page numbers in brackets are provided at the end of the quotation.

You might choose this method when you want the reader to think about each part of the quotation carefully. Placing the author's name in the middle of the quotation slows the reader down.

Option C:

"Perth is an isolated city geographically," writes McGuinness, " but contains within its boundaries many different cultures and nationalities" (56).

In Option C the author is acknowledged in between two different sections of the quotation.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the use of three dots in a quotation to show that you have left out a section. You use ellipsis when you only want to include part of the quotation in your essay or assignment.

Original:

At some companies, empowerment means encouraging employee ideas while managers retain final authority for decisions; at others it means giving front-line workers almost complete power to make decisions and exercise initiative and imagination.

Quoting using ellipsis:

"At some companies, empowerment means ... giving front-line workers almost complete power to make decisions and exercise initiative and imagination" (Daft 1999, 256).

(Source: http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/data/files7/202792/Chicago_Author-Date_16th_ed_.pdf)

When to use ellipsis

When should you use ellipsis? Use ellipsis when you want to show that you have left out words you don't need from a quotation.

Leaving out those words should **not** dramatically change the meaning of the statement.

Original quotation:

"Perth has many attractions for tourists and travellers. Tourists and travellers can visit a number of sites including the Bell Tower, King's Park, Cottesloe Beach and several fine nature reserves" (McGuinness, 45).

Quotation using ellipsis:

"Perth has many attractions for tourists and travellers ... including the Bell Tower, King's Park, Cottesloe Beach and several fine nature reserves" (McGuinness, 45).

More on ellipsis

Although you do not usually need to use an ellipsis (three dots) to show that words have been left out at the beginning or end of a quotation, **there is an exception to this rule.**

If there is a chance that your reader might mistake an incomplete quotation for a complete one, then you will need to include an ellipsis at the beginning or end of the quotation.

For example, if the original statement reads:

"Even though Sydney is the most famous city in Australia, Perth has many attractions for tourists and travellers" (McGuinness, 45).

and your quote only referred to Perth, you would need an ellipsis at the beginning of the sentence to show that you had left out a key piece of the original information:

Quotation using an ellipsis at the beginning of the sentence:

"... Perth has many attractions for tourists and travellers" (McGuinness, 45).

Inserting your own words into quotations: When?

There are a few circumstances in which you might need to insert your own words into a quotation in square brackets, in order to make the quotation flow more smoothly or be more grammatically accurate.

One circumstance is when you change a verb tense or pronoun in order to be consistent with the rest of the sentence. Here we changed the word 'me' to 'her' because the sentence leading up to the quotation is written in the third person.

Original:

We might know that when Jane Brown came to The Learning Centre she said "Everyone helped me."

We can turn this information into a more concise and grammatically accurate statement this way:

Jane Brown stated that when she came to The Learning Centre "everybody helped [her]" (McGuinness, 12).

Inserting your own words into quotations: When?

You can also insert your own words in square brackets into a quotation when you need to add extra information that the reader needs in order to understand that quotation properly.

For example:

"The budget has been greatly affected by the floods [of 2011]" (McGuinness, 15).

Inserting your words into quotations: When?

Finally, you can use your own words in square brackets when you want to express something more concisely and clearly.

Original:

"Empowerment programs can be difficult to implement in established organisations because they destroy hierarchies and upset the familiar balance of power" (Daft 1999, 257).

New version:

"Empowerment programs... destroy hierarchies [upsetting] the familiar balance of power" (Daft 1999, 257).

[sic]

If you need to use a quotation that contains nonstandard spelling grammar, spelling and punctuation then inserting the word 'sic' in square brackets can be useful. Sic means 'thus' or 'so' in Latin and indicates to the reader that the unconventional word use in the sentence stems from the writer and not from you.

It is always italicised and placed in brackets:

"Empowerment programs can be difficult to implement in established organizations [*sic*] ..." (Daft 1999, 257).

Note: The full stop at the end of your quotation moves to the end of your sentence after the citation

Integrating quotations smoothly

Work on integrating quotations smoothly into your own writing. It is also important to ensure that the words of others do not overwhelm your own words. There are a number of ways to avoid this.

- Never let quotations overwhelm your own words!
- Frame quotations with your ideas and explanations



Integrating quotations smoothly: Great introductions

Always introduce quotations carefully, using the content of the quotation to help you choose appropriate introductory verbs.

For example, if the quote states:

"I must emphasize that Perth is a very isolated city" (McGuinness, 15).

You could introduce it in this way:

"McGuinness stresses the fact that "Perth is a very isolated city" (McGuinness, 15).

Valuable verbs!

Try not to always introduce your quotes with the words "He said/stated" or "She said/stated". Use the content of the quotation to pick a verb that will introduce the sentence in a more fitting and memorable way.

Other verbs to choose from:

claimed/claims

asserted/asserts

suggested/suggests

contended/contends

argued/argues

agreed/agrees

proposed/proposes

cautioned/cautions

examined/examines

disclosed/disclosed

revealed/reveals

questioned/questions

And there are many more!

Smooth Integration – more tips

It is also important to follow quotations with explanations in your own words when you can, and a link to your next point. This ensures that your writing voice remains dominant and helps to ensure your work does not contain too much direct quoting.



Keeping your use of quotations in perspective to your own ideas

Remember that your voice or ideas are always important. Even when you need to refer to the ideas or work of others, it is essential that the main reason for doing this is to shed light on your own thoughts!

