

Using Sources in Research Papers:

Quotations, Summaries & Paraphrases

Whenever you include the words or ideas of someone else in your writing, you must give the source. In research papers, sources have to be documented with ways citations in the text of the paper and a list of references at the end. But this guide deals only with ways of working source material into a paper, not with citing and documenting it.

Words that are quoted verbatim (word-for-word) are put within quotation marks (“”); words that are summarized or paraphrased are not put in quotations marks, but are acknowledged in the text so that it is clear to the reader they are someone else’s thoughts.

RULES FOR PUNCTUATING QUOATAIONS

1. A comma goes after the signal phrase that introduces the quotation-- after phrases like *She said*, or *As Baker pointed out*, or *According to Kuralt*.
2. Periods and commas at the end of a quoted passage always go inside the final quotations mark.
3. Colons and semi-colons always go outside the final quotation mark.
4. Question marks and exclamation points go *inside* the final quotation mark if they apply only to the words within the quotes. They go *outside* the final quotation mark if they apply to the whole sentence in which the quotation appears. **Examples:**

St. Jean de Crevecoeur who asked the question, “What is an American?”

[Only the words within quotes are a question, so the question mark goes inside the quotation mark.]

Was it Crèvecoeur who said that “The American is a new man”?

[The whole sentence is a question, so the question mark goes outside the quotation mark.]

Was it St. Jean de Crèvecoeur who asked, “What is an American?”

[Question within a question: one question mark inside the quotation mark.]

QUOTING A COMPLETE SENTENCE OR GROUP OF SENTENCES

A complete sentence from the source that follows your own introduction would look like this:

Andrew Carnegie believed that the change from primitive to civilized conceptions is easy to see. He said, “In the manufacture of products we have the whole story.”

Sometimes, instead of putting the signal phrase at the beginning of the quote, you might want to use it as an interrupter. If you do, be sure to put it in a natural spot in the sentences. **Example:**

“In the manufacture of products,” says Carnegie, “we have the whole story.”

[Note the punctuation (comma, quotation marks, and a period at the end) also the capitalization is in the sentence.]

QUOTING PART OF A SENTENCE

If you want to use just a word or phrase from the original, work it naturally into your own sentence structure. **Example:**

Carnegie doesn't want to discuss whether the change from primitive to civilized society is good or bad, for he views it as “a waste of time to criticize the inevitable.”

[Punctuation note: in the sentence above there is no punctuation between the writer's words and the quoted passage. The quotation is worked smoothly into the writer's own sentence structure. When you do this, be sure that the whole sentence, including the quotation, makes grammatical sense, and that your words and the quoted words work smoothly together.]

Here is an example of a sentence in which the writer's words and the quotation *do not* fit together.

Carnegie doesn't want to discuss whether the change from primitive to civilized society is good or bad, for he views **it as** **"It is** a waste of time to criticize the inevitable."

[This sentence uses Carnegie's exact wording, but the quoted passage doesn't fit grammatically with the writer's own words. When you use quotations, read the whole sentence—including your words and the quotation. If it doesn't work, either change your own wording or use only part of the original. Don't change the wording of the original.]

Sometimes you might just want to use few words, or even one word, from your source. Again, they must be worked smoothly into your sentence. **Example:**

Carnegie says that the "whole story" of the change from primitive to civilized conditions can be seen in "the manufacture of products."

[Note: no commas.]

QUOTING LONG PASSAGES

Prose: Quotations longer than four typed lines of prose should be set off as a block quotation. Begin ten spaces from the left margin and write the quotation on that margin. Block quotations are not enclosed in quotation marks and are usually introduced by a sentence ending in a colon.

Example:

In his book *American Realism*, Edward Lucie-Smith explains how a new movement in American painting arose during the 1930's:

In 1930 a painting called *American Gothic* was shown at the Art Institute of Chicago's Forty-Third Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture. Reluctantly accepted by the jury, it was eventually awarded a bronze medal and a prize of \$300. It was not long before it had established itself as a national icon, symbol of a vanishing rural America. Its success marks the real beginning of the Regionalist movement in American art.

Poetry: More than three lines of poetry should be indented and set off, keeping the same line structure as the original. Short passages of two or three lines can be run into the text and the lines separated with slashes. **Example:**

In the opening lines of "sonnet 73," Shakespeare compares the coming of death to the coming of winter: That time of year thou mayst in me behold/ when yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang/ Upon those boughs that shake against the cold...."

[Note that the original capitalization and punctuation are preserved.]

Dialog: Indent passages of dialog, like block quotations, and enclose the words of the speakers in quotation marks. Begin a new paragraph with each change of speaker. **Example:**

The three young sisters raising their voices together called through their noses, "Glo-ri-a! Sister Gloria!"

From the company room up front a sweet cool voice called back, "We're busy right Now. Go on with out us."

"Well, ask the blessing like a streak o' lightning, Mr. Renfro." Miss Beulah told her husband. "The rest of us have got a world to do!"

INSERTING AND DELETING WORDS

The ellipsis mark, three spaced periods, is used to show that words have been deleted from the original. You can use it if you want to omit part of a sentence that would be confusing out of context, or that doesn't apply to the point you are making. If the words you are deleting come at the end of a sentence, add a period to the ellipsis mark.

Brackets are used to enclose words that have been inserted into a quotation.

Example: The following example shows the use of the ellipsis mark and brackets. The first sentence is the original as written; the second is the altered version.

“In 1931-32 he was the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at The Museum Art in New York, the second in the Museum’s History (the first had been devoted to Matisse).”

“In 1931-32 he [Diego Rivera] was the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the second in the museum’s history...”

Brackets are also used with the expression [sic]. This expression is placed after an error in the original text to show that the writer is aware of the error but is leaving the text in its original form.

REWORDING SOMEONE ELSE’S IDEA

You don't always need to quote verbatim. But even when you **summarize** or **paraphrase** (state in your own words) the ideas of another writer, you must acknowledge the source. The simplest way to do this is to state in your text where the idea is or information is coming from. **Examples:**

In *The Intellectual Savage*, Jamake Highwater claims that the people of different cultures see the world in fundamentally different ways.

Jeffrey Schrank, author of *Psychosell*, says that many advertisements sell products by appealing to something that is lacking in consumers' lives.

According to Peter H. Schuck, many Americans are worried about the growing population of immigrants to this country. They believe, says Schuck, that the idea of Pluribus Unum (one out of many) will be lost if majority.

The key point to remember is that the reader must know when you are borrowing from a source and when you are using your own words. (See the handouts on MLA and APA styles for more on citing sources within the text of your paper.)