

Quoting

Frequently Used In:
Speaking & Writing

The Art of Using Another's Words

When we use someone else's words in our writing, we quote them. Quoting authoritative sources can support our own arguments or, alternatively, can give us something to argue against. On their own however, quotes do little to advance our arguments unless they are thoroughly unpacked and connected to our own points. If used correctly, quoting can be an integral rhetorical device that puts us in conversation with other scholars.

Getting the Most out of Each Quote

1. Introduce the Quote

Introduce quotes by identifying the speaker to establish credibility and (if relevant) where and when the quote came from. Check out our *Verbs of Attribution* handout for the many ways you can say someone said something.

2. Quote the Quote

Stay true to the quote and the meaning of the quote. If you need to change verb tense, use brackets to denote the change []. If you need to omit part of the quote, use ellipses to note the omission (...).

3. Cite the Quote

Immediately following the quote, put in an in-text citation that follows whatever citation style you are using. For MLA and APA, put the citation in parentheses, and for Chicago Style, insert a footnote.

4. Rephrase the Quote

Assume your reader didn't actually read the quote. Tell us what *you* think your quote says in your own words.

5. Explain the Quote

Explain the meaning of the quote in the context of your paper and show the reader how it supports (or contradicts) your own arguments. Explicitly explain to the reader how the quote is important to your paper.

Quoting Isn't Always a Good Idea

Quoting can bring authoritative voices into our writing, but it doesn't show mastery of a concept. In most cases, paraphrasing information is better than quoting because it shows how we understood the author's argument. In the sciences, quoting is actively discouraged and can be a sign that the writer does not *actually* understand the topic under discussion. Essentially, quote only when the exact words in that exact order matter.