HOW TO USE QUOTES IN A RESEARCH PAPER

Quoting Material
Taking the exact words from an original source is called quoting. You should quote material when you believe the way the original author expresses an idea is the most effective means of communicating the point you want to make. If you want to borrow an idea from an author, but do not need his or her exact words, you should try paraphrasing instead of quoting.

How often should I quote?
Quote as infrequently as possible. You never want your essay to become a series of connected quotations, because that leaves little room for your own ideas. Most of the time, paraphrasing and summarizing your sources is sufficient (but remember that you still have to cite them!). If you think it’s important to quote something, an excellent rule of thumb is that for every line you quote, you should have at least two lines analyzing it.

Identifying Sources in the Body of Your Paper
The first time you cite a source, it is almost always a good idea to mention its author(s), title, and genre (book, article, or web page, etc.). If the source is central to your work, you may want to introduce it in a separate sentence or two, summarizing its importance and main ideas. But often you can just tag this information onto the beginning or end of a sentence. For example, the following sentence puts information about the author and work before the quotation:

Milan Kundera, in his book The Art of the Novel, suggests that “if the novel should really disappear, it will do so not because it has exhausted its powers but because it exists in a world grown alien to it” (17).  (Direct quotation; words found on page 17 of Kundera’s book)

According to David Hanes, a noted adolescent psychologist, “Teens eat more when they feel less about themselves” (72). (Direct quotation; words found on page 72 of Hanes’s book)

Experts like David Hanes agree that many teens eat in order to cover up their lack of self confidence (72). (Paraphrased idea; words found on page 72 of Hanes’s book)

You may also want to describe the authors if they are not famous, or if you have reason to believe your reader does not know them. You should say whether they are economic analysts, artists, physicists, etc. If you do not know anything about the authors, and cannot find any information, it is best to say where you found the source and why you believe it is credible and worth citing. For example,

In an essay presented at an Asian Studies conference held at Duke University, Sheldon Garon analyzes the relation of state, labor unions, and small businesses in Japan between the 1950s and 1980s.

If you have already introduced the author and work from which you are citing, and you are obviously referring to the same work, you probably don’t need to mention them again. However, if you have cited other sources and then go back to one you had cited earlier, it is a good idea to mention at least the author’s name again (and the work if you have referred to more than one by this author) to avoid confusion.
Unknown Author

It is not always necessary (or possible) to know about a specific source's background. In fact, sometimes you will only have an article's title. A quotation might read as follows:

In fact, last year (2001), "25% of Americans admitted to eating more when they were depressed about how they felt about themselves" ("Disorders"). (Direct quotation from article)

Research has indicated that many Americans eat more fudge and peanut butter when they have a lower estimation of themselves ("Depression Aids Confectionery Stocks"). (Paraphrased idea)

It has been proven that our tendency to inflate grades is not only a Long Island phenomena, but, "Nationally, the tide has turned, the days of actually earning a high grade seem to have declined" ("Grade Accuracy"). (Direct quotation inserted to support your point)

Make sure that when you include a quote or paraphrase, you clearly illustrate how the information relates to the section you are in which you are using the information. Don't expect the reader to always make the connection. In other words, tell the reader where you're coming from. Of course, some information may do this naturally.

How do I incorporate quotations in my paper?

Most of the time, you can just identify a source and quote from it, as in the examples above. Sometimes, however, you will need to modify the words or format of the quotation in order to fit in your paper. Whenever you change the original words of your source, you must indicate that you have done so. Otherwise, you would be claiming the original author used words that he or she did not use. But be careful not to change too many words. You could accidentally change the meaning of the quotation, and falsely claim the author said something he/she did not.

For example, let's say you want to quote from the following passage in an essay called “United Shareholders of America,” by Jacob Weisberg:

“The citizen-investor serves his fellow citizens badly by his inclination to withdraw from the community. He tends to serve himself badly as well. He does so by focusing his pursuit of happiness on something that very seldom makes people happy in the way they expect it to.”

When you quote, you generally want to be as concise as possible. Keep only the material that is strictly relevant to your own ideas. So here you would not want to quote the middle sentence, since it is repeated again in the more informative last sentence. However, just skipping it would not work – the final sentence would not make sense without it. So, you have to change the wording a little bit. In order to do so, you will need to use some editing symbols. Your quotation might end up looking like this:

In his essay, “United Shareholders of America,” Jacob Weisberg insists that “The citizen-investor serves his fellow citizens badly by his inclination to withdraw from the community. He tends to serve himself badly... by focusing his pursuit of happiness on something that very seldom makes people happy in the way they expect it to.” (No need for a parenthetical citation since all information is included in your sentence)

The ellipses ( . . . ) indicate that you have skipped over some words in order to condense the passage.

As a general rule, it is okay to make minor grammatical and stylistic changes to make the quoted material fit in your paper, but it is not okay to significantly alter the structure of the material or its content. (Identify those changes with ellipses or brackets.)
Quoting within Quotes
When you have “embedded quotes,” or quotations within quotations, you should switch from the normal quotation marks (""”) to single quotation marks (‘’) to show the difference. For example, if an original passage by John Archer reads:

The Mountain Coyote has been described as a “wily” and “single-minded” predator by zoologist Ima Warner.

your quotation might look like this:

As John Archer explains, “The Mountain Coyote has been described as a ‘wily’ and ‘single-minded’ predator by zoologist Ima Warner” (28). (Note the double quotes surrounding the entire quotation, and the single quotes around the words quoted in the original. Direct quotation from page 28 of book by Archer.)

Parenthetical References
The following is a run-down of how to use parenthetical references for a variety of traditional sources.

Documenting a source with an author

"Approximately 70% of all high school students graduate knowing what career they want to go into after college" (Smithers 27). (Direct quotation from a book; words found on page 27)

Documenting a source without an author

"The raising of the speed limit has had massive effects on highway accident fatalities in this country" ("Changing Speeds, Changing History" 72). (Direct quotation from an long article)

Documenting an electronic source. If the source numbers the screens or paragraphs, use those in your citation. If there are no numbers, omit any page reference in parentheses.

One nurse questions whether doctors are adequately trained in tending patients' feelings (Van Eijk, pars. 6-7). (Paraphrased ideas found in 6th and 7th paragraphs of this internet source)

Documenting a source which uses another source

"Many scholars believe that Shakespeare did not write many of the plays ascribed to him. This is utter nonsense" (French qtd. Fontenrose 75). (An author named French quoted another person named Fontenrose whose words appeared on page 75 of Fontenrose’s book)

How do I include long quotes in my paper?

For quotations that extend to more than four lines of verse or prose, place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented one inch from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by a half inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your parenthetical citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.
For example, when citing more than four lines of prose, use the following examples:

**As Wilmut argues the impracticality of cloning,**

> No reasonable and rational person would really want to clone a child given the dismal track record of my team and others worldwide. To repeat the Dolly experience in human hands would mean obtaining about 300 eggs, which are already in short supply, persuading twenty-nine women to agree to having an embryo implanted. Of those, twenty-eight would risk the...emotional turmoil of failed pregnancies, miscarriages, and deformed fetuses so that one embryo will “take” to produce a child. (Wilmut and Highfield 226-227)

While the above is the correct form for inserting a long quotation, we encourage students instead of using long quotes, to paraphrase. Paraphrasing should give the reader a better opportunity to digest the source material.

The above material was developed using the following resources:
- http://www.schenectady.k12.ny.us/Schenectady_High_School/Library/Quoting.pdf
- http://www.jerichoschools.org/hs/ogre/

**Your essay is your argument**

Too many quotations, too many voices, can overpower your own. Quotations should fit into your argument, not appear out of thin air. They should be grammatically consistent with the rest of your essay. If punctuation, pronouns, and verb tenses don’t flow with your own words, paraphrase and cite the needed material, or make minor changes within the quotation, surrounding them with brackets [ ]. All quotations should be unobtrusive.

Quote only sentences, passages, or words that are especially succinct, memorable, or powerful. Save direct quotations for brilliant comments, controversial statements, certain statistics, and personal testimony that you believe will strengthen your argument.

If a quotation is long, or if you can say it better or more concisely, paraphrase it (restate it in your own words). Remember, you must indicate a source even when paraphrasing. Keep paraphrasing to a minimum because it is your ideas, your argument that counts to convince your readers.

Always integrate quotations into your text. NEVER DROP A QUOTATION IN YOUR ESSAY! In other words, you must use your own words to introduce a quotation. The good old standby—So-and-so said, "blah blah blah"—is the very least you can do. Even better is when you can use some select words and phrases from a quotation and integrate them into a sentence of your own (always putting those words or phrases in quotation marks, though).

**Maintaining a smooth sentence style**

In order to make your own writing flow as smoothly as possible, it's usually best to use only an effective part of a quotation as part of one of your own sentences. So instead of boring your reader with this:

> The narrator says, "Who can even imagine me looking a strange white man in the eye?" (232).

write something like this:

> The narrator asks if anyone could imagine her "looking a strange white man in the eye" (232).
At one point the mother says, "I used to think [Dee] hated Maggie, too" (233).

At one point the mother admits that she "used to think [Dee] hated Maggie, too" (233).

Preparing for and following up on a quotation

To integrate a quotation properly within a paragraph, a good writer usually writes one sentence to introduce the quotation, a second sentence that includes the quotation, and a third (and possibly a fourth and fifth) sentence to comment on the significance of the quotation. Here are some examples:

**ORIGINAL:** The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees.

**SMOOTHLY INTEGRATED QUOTATION:**

Hemingway uses the image of a momentary darkness to suggest the woman's growing disillusionment. After her quarrel with the man, "[t]he shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain . . ." (21). A similar shadow gradually develops over their relationship.

**ORIGINAL:** That look of seeing into things, of seeing through a thing to something else, was in the eyes of the sheriff's wife now.

**SMOOTHLY INTEGRATED QUOTATION:**

Mrs. Peters sometimes appears to be almost supernatural. For example, Glaspell describes her "look of seeing into things, of seeing through a thing to something else . . ." (333). However, this "look" really demonstrates a sense of intuition rather than any magical powers.

The above material was developed using the following: http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/patten/usingquotes.html

A Variety of Verbs to use in introducing quotations

acknowledges, adds, admits, affirms, agrees, argues, asserts, believes, claims, comments, compares, concludes, confirms, contends, counters, declares, demonstrates, denies, disputes, emphasizes, endorses, explains, grants, illustrates, implies, insists, maintains, notes, observes, points out, reasons, refutes, rejects, reports, responds, reveals, states, suggests, thinks, underlines, writes

Putting it all together

After you have written your introduction, with a thesis that explains what your essay is about, you will write your essay as a series of paragraphs, each proving a different idea related to your thesis. The paragraph begins with a topic sentence that gives direction—provides the topic—for the rest of the paragraph. This topic sentence is your claim, your idea, which you will prove throughout the paragraph using evidence and analysis. If you start a paragraph with the evidence (a quotation), your reader has no idea what it is you are proving. It is like starting a conversation with the phrase, “For example.” Your conversation partner would look at you in confusion and ask, “An example of what?” Once you have stated your topic sentence, you can lead to the example so your reader knows what idea you are trying to prove with the evidence.
Let's look at an example body paragraph from a research essay.

Some groups have argued that state traffic laws make legislation regulating cell phone use unnecessary. Sadly, this is not true. Laws on traffic safety vary from state to state, and drivers distracted by cell phones can get off with light punishment even when they cause fatal accidents. For example, although the midshipman mentioned earlier was charged with vehicular manslaughter for the deaths of John and Carole Hall, the judge was unable to issue a verdict of guilty. Under Maryland law, he could only find the defendant guilty of negligent driving and impose a $500 fine (Layton C1). Such a light sentence is not unusual. The driver who killed Morgan Pena in Pennsylvania received two tickets and a $50 fine—and retained his driving privileges (Pena). In Georgia, a young woman distracted by her phone ran down and killed a two-year-old; her sentence was ninety days in boot camp and five hundred hours of community service (Ippolito J1). The families of the victims are understandably distressed by laws that lead to such light sentences.


Another body paragraph follows:

Despite the prevalence of depression and related disorders on campus, most students avoid seeking help when they need it. The American Psychiatric Association maintains that most mental health issues – depression especially – can be managed or overcome by therapy and/or medication. But among students with diagnosed depression, according to the American College Health Association, a mere 26 percent get therapy and only 37 percent take medication (204). One reason for such low numbers can be found in a survey conducted by mtvU, a resource network for college students, and the Jed Foundation, an organization dedicated to reducing suicide among college students: Only 22 percent of students would be willing to ask for help even if they were certain they needed it, because they perceive mental illness as embarrassing and shameful (2-3). Thus, students who need help suffer additional pain – and no treatment – because they fear the stigma of mental illness.