This handout will cover:

1. How to select quotations
2. How to set up quotations
3. How to punctuate sentences with quotations
4. How to integrate block quotations

Learning how to integrate quotes into a paper is an important skill to have. For instance, how do you know when to use quotations as opposed to paraphrasing or summarizing? Or how do you introduce quotations? In addition, what is the proper punctuation to use for a quotation? The answers to these questions are addressed below and will help to provide a better understanding of how to integrate quotations into a paper.

- Quoting should be used when there is a line or passage that is very well written and when it can bring more credibility and authority to your paper.

- However, only the most relevant parts of a quote should be integrated into the paper. This can be done by selecting the parts of the quote that are most pertinent to your point.

- Quotations should also be used to advance your argument and not be left alone to speak for themselves. Never leave the quote without explaining it and tying it back to a point you are making. Free standing quotes only take up space without doing any work to advance your argument.

- Be careful of relying too much on quotations. This can be avoided by carefully considering when to use quotes. Quoting more does not necessarily improve the paper and may even distract the reader from your voice in the paper.

- Please keep in mind that these are only general guidelines and that it is always important to quote and cite according to the style you are writing in (for more information see Guide to APA, Guide to MLA, or Guide to the Chicago Manual of Style handouts at http://www.sfsu.edu/~carp1/helpfulhandouts.htm).

How to select quotations:

The first and most important step of integrating quotes into a paper is to learn how to select what to quote. This step is essential because much of the material or information you come across in your reading or research will not need to be quoted. Therefore, it is important to be judicious with what you choose to quote. It requires that you understand the argument being made and what quotes will aid you in strengthening and adding variety your paper.
Keep these questions in mind when selecting a quote:

A. What is my argument or point for this paragraph or section?
B. What is the meaning of the quote I want to use?
C. How does the quote advance or strengthen my point or argument?
D. Can the quote be paraphrased or summarized?

Don’t make the argument fit the quote you want to use, make the quote fit the argument you are making.

Example A:

The culture in the United States can be characterized as one that places the individual above collective interests. It is considered a very individualistic culture that places high value on personal interests, goals and rights. This is especially evident in American celebrations of individual rights.

Here are two quotes that could be integrated into the paragraph above.

Quote 1

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”[sic]

Quote 2

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we’re liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

Both quotes appear to be relevant to the focus of the paragraph on American culture. However, given the argument being made in the paragraph, it is clear that the first quote will advance the main point better than the second quote.

The first quote can be used to illustrate American values that are epitomized by the famous line from the Declaration of Independence. These are clearly individual rights and they display the emphasis on individualism in American culture. Therefore, this quote fits well when emphasizing individual rights.

The second quote shows another well-known quote from writer, Marianne Williamson, that emphasizes personal excellence and individual achievement. While this quote could be used, it would alter the direction of the paragraph as it is currently constructed. This quote may fit best when looking for evidence to support a discussion about individual accomplishments.
Revised Example A:

The culture in the United States can be characterized as one that places the individual above collective interests. It is considered a very individualistic culture that places high value on personal interests, goals and rights. This is evident in American celebrations of individual rights. For instance, the phrase often attributed to personal rights in the United States from the Declaration of Independence is, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are all individual rights that epitomize the American cultural values of individualism.

How to setup quotations:

When you have decided to use a quotation, the next step is setting up the quote. It is important to provide context for your quote. This should include identifying the author and source that the quote is from. This can be done through a signal phrase. Signal phrases are verbs that indicate when someone is speaking. A signal phrase shows the reader who is speaking and helps to indicate that someone else’s idea is about to be presented.

Example B:

During the Gettysburg Address in Philadelphia in 1863, President Lincoln declared, "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, [sic] and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Notice that the context of the quote is provided through identifying the author, Lincoln, the time period, 1863, and the place, Philadelphia, for this particular quote. In addition, the signal phrase “President Lincoln declared” helps to indicate that a quote is about to be presented.

Ways to punctuate an integrated quotation:

There are two ways often used for punctuating a quote and integrating it correctly. The first is a comma and the second is a colon. When attributing the quote with a signal phrase, use a comma between the attribution and the quote.

Example C:

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Notice the comma goes after the verb. This indicates that the quote is forthcoming. On the other hand, using a colon can help to smoothly incorporate the quote into a sentence while also providing context.
Example D:

Socrates' intellectually rigorous life was epitomized by one of his most famous quotes: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Notice that there is an independent clause that is followed by a colon before the quotation. The quote here has also been contextualized prior to the quotation being presented. This is another way to incorporate a quotation into a paper when more context is required prior to presenting the quote.

Remember, the quotes must be cited and citation will depend on the style you are using. Generally, however, a citation will immediately follow the quote and be outside the quotation marks.

Block Quotations:

There are times when using lengthy quotes may be necessary. These are usually known as block quotes. What is considered a block quote can differ depending on the citation style being used. Generally, any quote more than 4 lines or 40 words will be considered a block quote.

- When block quoting, be sure to indent the entire quotation from the left hand margin
- Use a signal phrase with a colon to introduce the block quote
- Do not use quotation marks because the format indicates that it is a quote
- Place the citation immediately after the last sentence in the quote

Remember that more specific guidelines for your quote will likely be provided by the citation style you are writing in.

Example E:

In one of Dr. King’s most famous speeches, he uses a dream metaphor to convey his goals for the civil rights movement in full swing at the time:

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

This block quote illustrates the guidelines above and also displays a very powerful passage from King’s speech that can only be captured by a lengthy quote.

Again, it is important to keep in mind that you should always be consulting your respective citation style to obtain the exact format for integrating block quotes.
Bibliography


