

Integrating Direct Quotations

Read: *The St. Martin's Handbook* p. 270-280.

In addition to using summaries and paraphrases, you can incorporate borrowed information and ideas into your own writing by quoting directly. Well-chosen quotes can add valuable support to your arguments, especially when they come from a prominent figure or well-known authority on the topic being discussed. Use quotes sparingly, however. Large numbers of direct quotes or overly lengthy quotes will drown out your voice and turn your argument over to others. Direct quotes can definitely help you to buttress and support your own ideas, but don't rely on quotes to express your ideas for you.

You can bring quotes into your essays in a number of ways, all of which are modeled in *The St. Martin's Handbook*. You may quote an entire sentence or choose simply to weave a quoted phrase into your own sentence. If you wish to use a lengthy quote (more than four typed lines), you must block it by indenting one inch and justifying the text on the left margin.

Using Quotes Ethically

Quotes must be handled ethically. To avoid misquoting, always copy the quote exactly as it was found, including making no changes to its punctuation. In addition, never take a quote out of context and use it in a way that misrepresents or distorts the quoted person's view. For example, if you read an essay by John Doe in which Doe summarizes a view with which he disagrees before refuting it, quoting parts of Doe's summary as though they represent Doe's opinion will have gravely misrepresented his view.

There are, however, a number of ethical ways to alter quotes without distorting meaning. For example, if you want to quote only a portion of a lengthy passage, you may omit the undesired section by using ellipsis (...) as long as the omission does not cause a change in meaning. To insert words of your own into a quote so that it will blend grammatically into your text or to explain a confusing reference, you may use brackets [] to indicate the change you have made.

Integrating Quotes

All quoted material must be smoothly integrated into your text. To do this, first, introduce the quote with a signal phrase, attributive tag, or an information sentence which lets the reader know that a quote is coming. "Dropping" a quote into the text without introducing it will not prepare readers for it. Quotes should never stand alone as a complete sentence.

Second, follow the quote with commentary and interpretation. Unless you comment on or interpret the quote, making sure readers understand how it applies to the point you are using it to make, readers may never make the connection on their own. Quoted material can't make your argument for you; only when you supply the commentary needed to connect the quote to your argument will the quote buttress and support your views.

Ways to Introduce Quotes

Attributive tag (separated from the quote by a comma):

John F. Kennedy urged, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” (1073).

Signal phrase (separated from the quote by a comma):

One of our greatest presidents inspired a whole generation by saying, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” (1073).

Information sentence (separated from the quote by a colon):

President John F. Kennedy issued an unforgettable challenge to his fellow citizens in his inaugural address: “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” (1073).

Note: Always use a complete sentence followed by a colon to introduce a blocked quote.

Varying the Placement of the Introduction

To break up a long quotation or to occasionally vary the way you introduce quotes, place the attributive tag in a logical position in the middle of the quote. Notice that when this is done, the attributive tag is set off by commas and each half of the quotation is enclosed in quotation marks. Notice in the example below that the comma belongs inside the first set of quotation marks because it marks a break in Kennedy's words. The second comma is the writer's and thus precedes the second set of quotation marks.

“Let us never negotiate out of fear,” said John F. Kennedy, “but let us never fear to negotiate” (1073).

Blending Quotes, Key Words and Phrases

When quoted sentences, phrases, or key words are blended directly into a sentence, sometimes with the word “that,” the first word is not capitalized and no commas or colons precede the quoted material.

When he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. told his audience that he had “an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind” (1082).

Thomas Jefferson wrote to George Washington advising him that “delay is preferable to error” (471).

Written Assignment

Below are a series of quotes. For each one, the name of the speaker and, in some cases, the date, place and/or circumstances for the remark(s) are provided. Use this information to introduce or blend the quote as directed and to supply the needed citation. For help with format, punctuation, and the use of ellipsis or brackets, follow the guidelines above and those in *The Penguin Handbook*.

1. Introduce the quote with an information sentence.

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Speaker: Winston Churchill

Circumstances: Battle of Britain, Tribute to the Royal Air Force in 1940.

From p. 921 of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*

2. Introduce the quote with an information sentence and use brackets to clarify a confusing pronoun reference.

"It created in this country what had never existed before - a national consciousness. It was not the salvation of the Union; it was the rebirth of the Union."

Speaker: Woodrow Wilson

Circumstances: Memorial Day, 1915, on the 50th anniversary of the end of the Civil War

From p. 841 of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*

3. Introduce as a block quote and condense the quote using ellipsis.

"A writer expresses himself in words that have been used before because they give his meaning better than he can give it himself, or because they are beautiful or witty, or because he expects them to touch a chord of association in his reader, or because he wishes to show that he is learned and well read. Quotations due to the last motive are invariably ill advised."

Writer: H.W. Fowler in *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, 1926 edition.

From p. 851 of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*

4. Place the attributive tag at a logical point in the middle of the quote.

"Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it."

Speaker: Abraham Lincoln

From p. 636 of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*