

Gross's Notes on Quotes

English 104

When you're using quotations from your sources, you need to be selective. You should use quotations to complement your own words and to add the ideas of an authority on the subject. You should not use quotations to pad the length of your essay or to let other writers "write" for you. Please refer to section 20c, "When to quote and when to paraphrase," on page 337-38 of the *Penguin Handbook*.

Never let a quotation stand alone as a sentence in your essay. You can choose from a few ways to introduce quotations, and below I have included some examples.

1. You can lead into a quotation with a signal phrase (a verb that introduces the quotation). See page 342 of the *Penguin Handbook* for a list of these words. Although it would be simple to always use "says" or "writes" as your signal phrase, your goal should be to pick a word that describes the manner in which the quotation is relayed by the author. Words like "asserts," "contends," "argues," and "suggests," for example, all have more nuanced meanings than "says."

Example: Terry Tempest Williams asserts, "Tolerating blind obedience in the name of patriotism or religion ultimately takes our lives" (171).

In the above example, the quotation does not stand alone as a sentence. The writer's name and signal phrase lead into the quotation. You may, however, be able to provide even more information to contextualize a quotation in your writing by adding a descriptive dependent clause before (or after) the independent clause.

Example: Defending her decision to act against Mormon and family tradition, Terry Tempest Williams asserts, "Tolerating blind obedience in the name of patriotism or religion ultimately takes our lives" (171).

2. If you have an entire sentence before the quotation, you can use a colon (:) to set up the quoted information.

Example: In "The Clan of the One-Breasted Women," Terry Tempest Williams spends a considerable amount of time talking about the influence of Mormon culture on her initial inability to speak out as an adult: "In Mormon culture, authority is respected, obedience is revered, and independent thinking is not. I was taught as a young girl not to 'make waves' or 'rock the boat'" (171).

In the above example, notice that words that Williams initially had in quotation marks ("make waves" and "rock the boat") have been put in single quotation marks (‘) to eliminate confusion.

3. If you want to borrow a writer's word, phrase, or part of a sentence, remember that you can just quote selectively from the source. No rule says that you have to use an entire sentence from the source. Remember, though, that when you quote part of a sentence, you must ensure that you do not distort or misrepresent the writer's meaning.

Example: Parker Palmer intends to illustrate how the "hierarchical, linear, and compulsive-hygienic" objectivist myth misrepresents the way humans learn, and he argues that the subject centered community of truth model, where "knowing and teaching and learning look . . . less like a bureaucracy and more like bedlam," more accurately represents the way humans form and acquire knowledge (116).

In the above example, notice how I use the ellipses (. . .) to show that I have eliminated part of the quotation. If you start in the middle of a quotation, you don't need the ellipses to show that you're beginning in the middle, and if you end a quotation early, you don't need the ellipses to show that the quotation continues. If you omit the middle of a quotation, however, you need the ellipses to show that you have eliminated part of the quotation.

*** If you quote a passage of 4 or more whole lines, the quotation should be set up (for MLA style) as a block quotation. Unlike regular quotations, block quotations do not need quotation marks around them, but they should be set aside—indented 2 tabs (10 spaces). Please refer to 338-39 in the *Penguin Handbook* for more information on block quotations.

Refer to page 340 in the *Penguin Handbook* for tips on effectively using quotations.

Practice: On a separate sheet of notebook paper, please practice your quoting and paraphrasing skills by doing the following.

1. Integrate **part** of this quotation from Deborah Tannen into a sentence of your own: “My aim is not to put a stop to the adversarial paradigm, the doubting game, debate—but to diversify: Like a well-balanced stock portfolio, we need more than one path to the goal we seek” (153).
2. Paraphrase the following passage from Terry Tempest Williams. Change her first person voice to third person, and remember to vary her sentence structure and word choices but to avoid changing or omitting and key information:
We are a Mormon family with roots in Utah since 1847. The word-of-wisdom, a religious doctrine of health, kept the women in my family aligned with good foods: no coffee, no tea, tobacco, or alcohol. For the most part, these women were finished having their babies by the time they were thirty. And only one faced breast cancer prior to 1960. Traditionally, as a group of people, Mormons have a low rate of cancer. (169)
3. Set up the following quotation from Parker Palmer with a signal phrase and a descriptive dependent clause: “When we reduce great things to such dismissive categories, we rob them of their selfhood and deprive them of their voice” (121).
4. Use a complete sentence and a colon to set up the following quotation from Parker Palmer: “The community of truth is an image that can carry the educational mission because it embraces an essential fact: the reality we belong to, the reality we long to know, extends far beyond human beings interacting with one another” (119).
5. For the following quotation from Terry Tempest Williams, use ellipses to omit a middle section from the quotation. Use any method you want to lead into the quotation:
It is a well-known story in the Desert West, “The Day We Bombed Utah,” or perhaps “The Years We Bombed Utah.” Above ground atomic testing in Nevada took place from January 27, 1951, through July 11, 1962. Not only were the winds blowing north, covering “low use segments of the population” with fallout and leaving sheep dead in their tracks, but the climate was right. The United States of the 1950s was red, white, and blue. The Korean War was raging. McCarthyism was rampant. Ike was it and the Cold War was hot. If you were against nuclear testing, you were for a Communist regime. (170)