Integrating Quotations and Paraphrases (MLA)

Introduction of Quotations

Introduce the quotation or paraphrase by setting it in context. For a nonfiction source, identify the author the first time you cite the source. For a literary source, identify the speaker or writer and the position of the quoted piece in its work for every quotation.

- You can use a full sentence followed by a colon to introduce a quotation.

  Coming upon the witches, Macbeth unknowingly echoes them: “So foul and fair a day I have not seen” (1.3.39).

  Economist Grant Houston lays the blame on bad government policy: “subsidies to corn growers keep the price of corn artificially low” (122).

- You can use a lead-in naming the author or character, followed by a comma.

  Often since his walk, the speaker confides, “They flash upon that inward eye/ Which is the bliss of solitude” (21-22).

  According to Sanchez, parents are furious about the ban on bake sales at schools (“PTA Focuses on Food” 16). [No quotation marks in this example because it’s a paraphrase.]

- You can also begin a sentence with your own words and complete it with quoted words. In this case, don’t use a comma before the quotation.

  Mr. Bennet, however, is “among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley” (7).

  Houston argues that “tariffs on imported sugar unfairly subsidize US sugar growers” (248).

Punctuation with Quotations

- If the quotation ends in a punctuation mark such as a period or a comma, drop that final punctuation mark (keep it only if it’s an exclamation mark or a question mark). At the end of the sentence containing the quotation, provide a parenthetical citation of the page or line number, and put a period at the end of the whole sentence.

  Mr. Bennet, however, is “among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley” (7). [The period that concludes the quoted sentence in the original has been dropped.]
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Punctuation with Quotations, continued.

- **If you quote words that are in quotation marks in the original, such as character dialogue in a novel, then use double quote marks enclosing single quote marks.**

  Talking to Wickham about Darcy, Elizabeth says, “‘He is a man of very large property in Derbyshire, I understand’” (67).

- **When quoting poetry, indicate line breaks with a slash mark.**

  The speaker may live in a city, but his heart in on the island: “While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,/ I hear it in the deep heart’s core” (11-12).

- **Quotations must match the source exactly. Indicate omissions with three dots (ellipsis), and indicate insertions with square brackets.**

  Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions: “The tears began to flow and sobs shook him... [T]he other little boys began to shake and sob too” (186).

**Block Quotations**

- **Set off a quotation of more than 50 words of prose or 3 lines of poetry by beginning a new line and indenting the body of the quotation one inch in from the left margin of your text (a “block quotation”). Block quotations are double spaced like the rest of your essay and not surrounded by quotation marks. With a block quotation, put the period before the parenthetical citation instead of after.**

  **A quotation of more than 50 words of prose:**
  Ralph and the other boys realize the horror of their actions:
  
  The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island: great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. (186)

  **A quotation of more than 3 lines of poetry:**
  Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" is rich in evocative detail:
  
  The waiting room
  was full of grown up people,
  arctics and overcoats,
  lamps and magazines. (6-10)