

Quoting in MLA Projects

Quotes are an effective way to strengthen the information used in papers. However, plagiarism (not giving proper credit for someone else's words) must be avoided. Also, the amount of quoting should be limited so that the writer's own voice will balance the research and the thesis (purpose of the paper).

In-text Citations:

Use in-text citations after quoting a source in the paper:

- Use the author's name in the sentence or add it in the parentheses () with the page number to identify the source of the words. Examples:

Smith says, "Lightning is dangerous" (34).

"Lightning is dangerous" (Smith 34).

"Lightning is dangerous," according to Smith (34).

Notice where the quotation marks are placed and where the punctuation is placed for each example.

Only use the author's first name the first time it appears in a sentence. After that, simply refer to the author by his or her last name. Do not use a first name in the (). Example:

John Smith says, "Lightning is dangerous" (34). This is a good thing to keep in mind during a storm. Smith adds, "Preparation can make a difference" (49). Many people are hurt by lightning because they panic. "Staying away from tall objects" is one important rule (Smith 55).

- Quotes should not stand alone as sentences. Example:

Smith says that "hamburgers are good" (3). Balance the quoted material with the writer's own voice within the sentence.

Not – "Hamburgers are good" (Smith 3).

- Quotes/paraphrases should not be back to back—add an explanation in the writer's own words. Example:

Alex Jones says, "Poe is not easily understood" (34). Although many critics agree with this stand, others take a more direct approach. Harley Brown feels that Jones is unfair in his stance.

Brown further claims, "Poe should not be dismissed so quickly as a source of further study" (49).

- Any sentence that contains a direct quote should either include the author's name in the sentence and have a (page #) at the end or include author/page in the (). Paraphrasing could be several sentences long, starting with the author's name and ending with a citation after the last sentence.

Example:

Maya Angelou wants her readers to know that she is "not living her life under the rules of others" (2).

Critic Amy Leon thinks this is how Angelou deals with prejudice. Leon goes on to explain that the poet has had extensive training in public relations, but Angelou is also an outspoken advocate for human rights. She will not bend to public opinion if it goes against her own personal beliefs (23-25).

Notice how the direct quote has a page number after it and the paraphrase as a whole contains another set of numbers at the end.

- The period goes after the citation, not at the end of the sentence. Example:

Johnson says, "Do it" (1). NEVER — Johnson says, "Do it." (1).

Blocked Quotes: Quotes longer than 4 typed lines should be blocked to separate the quote from the rest of the text.

- Identify the author in the sentence preceding the block
- 1 tab indent
- No quote marks
- Period at the end of the sentence, not after the citation
- At least one other sentence after the block

Example:

Jose Garza, a direct descendent of Pancho Villa, summarizes:

The last mention of public hanging was in Philmore, Oklahoma in the early 20s, and the victim was Jeremiah Landers, accused of cattle rustling. It is interesting to note that Jeremiah was taken directly to the gallows, right after the verdict, and hanged, but the sheriff was not convinced he was guilty. Another man later confessed, and the townspeople were so ashamed of the event that they outlawed hanging. (23)

This event marked the downward trend of immediate hangings without the benefit of a thorough investigation of the crime. It also established a basis for later critics to cite unnecessarily cruel punishment for crimes.

Works Cited Page:

With MLA format, a separate Works Cited page follows the last page of the paper. This page contains all sources listed in alphabetical order, not the way they are used in the paper. Any information, including quotes, paraphrases, summaries, etc. must feature an in-text citation as well as a listing on the Works Cited page.

The Tutoring Center has additional information on these topics in the Center in JH 106 and 108, as well as on the online InfoRack found on the Tutoring Center website.