

## Quoting Tips

*A Bridgewater College Writing Center Handout*

### ***Quoting: When & Why***

Use quotations when:

- you plan to discuss the author's words;
- you want to use expert testimony to support your argument;
- you want to make use of another writer's phrasing because it is more appropriate than anything you could say.

### ***Quoting: How***

- Quote sparingly.
- Be scrupulously accurate.
- Don't distort the author's meaning by taking scraps of text that support your point but don't accurately or fully represent the author's view.
- **Don't use another author's words to make your point.** Make your point in your own words and relate the quotation to your point.
- Introduce the quotation. Use phrasing like "According to Smith" or "Medical researcher Donald Smith observes, . . ." as well as relating the quotation to your point.
- Comment on the quotation after it. Do **not** end a paragraph with a quotation. Do not begin a paragraph with a quote.
- If you are quoting two sentences from the same paragraph or the same page, deleting some sentences between them, use ellipsis, which looks like this— . . . —to separate them, keeping the two sentences in the same quotation, unless you want to discuss each sentence as part of a separate point. You may also delete irrelevant words within a sentence—that is, words that are irrelevant to your point—and substitute ellipsis, **if** you are not distorting the author's meaning by doing so.
- If you use only a phrase from another author, integrate it into your sentence.
- If you need to change phrasing to integrate a quotation into your sentence, for example, changing "claiming" to "claims" or "he" to "George Brown," make the change and enclose the changed wording in square brackets:  
According to Maguire, "Johnson [claims] . . .".  
Smith argues that "[George Brown] represents . . .".
- If there is a mistake, for example a misspelling or a missing word, in the material you are quoting, copy the author's words accurately, but add the word *sic* in square brackets immediately following the mistake. The word *sic* means "thus," so what is implied is, "Yes, I know this is wrong, but this is the way I found it in the quotation."  
"It is not appropriate [*sic*] to . . ." (Cleary 85).
- Place parenthetical documentation after the quotation marks that close the quotation, but place the period after the parenthetical documentation. This way you make the documentation part of the sentence that includes the quotation.  
"Plato was concerned with the relationship between what is eternal and immutable, on the one hand, and what 'flows,' on the other" (Gaarder 82).
- Indent long quotations (over 4 lines in MLA Style, over 40 words in APA). When you indent a quotation, do not use quotation marks. Place the parenthetical citation after the final period of the quotation when you indent. You are not allowed to have quotes that are more than two lines long.

What is needed for in-text citations?

- ✓ Lead in
- ✓ Page number
- ✓ Author name
- ✓ Relevance

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