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Quoting in MLA Projects

Quotes are a great way to confirm the information you use in your papers. However, be careful not to use too many quotes or you will not have enough of your own words and information to warrant a good grade from your instructor.

In-text Citations:

Use in-text citations after you quote a source in your paper:

- Use the author's name in the sentence or add it in the parentheses () with the page number so that you identify which source the words came from. 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 and where the punctuation is for each example. Any of these examples are acceptable to use within your paper.

- Only use the author's first name the first time it appears in a sentence. After that, you can simply refer to the author by their 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 agrees with Jones's comment that "hamburgers are good" (3).

NEVER – "Hamburgers are good" (3). You must have some of your words with the quotation.

- Quotes/paraphrases should not be back to back—add an explanation in your 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 evaluation. Brown further claims, "Poe should not be discounted so quickly as a source of further study" (49).

- Any sentence that contains a direct quote should have a () at the end containing the page number. 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:

- 2 tabs indent
- No quote marks
- Period at the end of the sentence, not after the citation
- At least one other sentence after the block.
- Quotes longer than 4 lines should be blocked to separate the quote from the rest of your text. 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 out 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 marks the downward trend of humiliating prisoners.

Works Cited Page:

With MLA format, you need to have a separate page after your essay called the Works Cited page. This page contains your sources in alphabetical order. Any information, including quotes, paraphrases, summaries, etc. must feature an in-text citation as well as a listing on your works cited page. For more information on this, check out our handout on MLA format.