Incorporating Quotes Study Sheet

Goals for this Study Sheet

Part of the importance of knowing how or when to incorporate a quote is keeping the flow of your essay smooth. Your reader will want pertinent information, and the interjection of an irrelevant or badly formatted quote can disrupt your audience’s attention/focus. Formatting a quote incorrectly also affects your essay academically, so learning a basic structure for introducing a quote to emphasize your point or bringing relevant information will become an asset. We hope that you might be able to discern these things by the end of the sheet.

Why Use Quotes?

Quotes are essential to essay-writing, especially with research and argumentative essays. Part of the purpose of quoting is to support your paper. Think of a quote as beams on a bridge. You already have the foundations and structure, but your bridge will topple later without support. Generally, quotes should be used for supplementary information, supporting your overall stance, or to define something specific to a very niche topic.

Basic Structure for Quotes Within Sentences

Let’s begin with the basic structure of a sentence that has an incorporated quote. When first introducing a quote, you’ll want to start with the author and title of the text you are referencing, if you have not already referenced the text earlier in your essay. So, when introducing a quote from a source that hasn’t been mentioned yet, it should generally look like this:
[Source(author/writer/speaker)] [connecting phrase] [Text (this includes film or audio) the quote is pulled from] [optional phrase drawing information from the quote or emphasizing the relevancy].

If you have already listed/mentioned the source and text earlier, the format should look like this:

[Source’s Last Name] [connecting phrase] [quote] [page number].

Or this:

[Connecting phrase] [quote] [source’s last name page number].

**Other Types of Structure for Quotes Within Sentences**

The following are some different ways you could format a quote within a sentence:

**Quoting Mid-Sentence**

This first example follows the basic format in the first break-down of how you might structure an incorporated quote:

Angela Davis wrote in her book *Women, Race, and Class*, “…sexual inequality as we know it today did not exist before the advent of private property,” deftly pointing to the way capitalism changed the dynamic of a household and shared responsibility.

This example emphasizes how you can transition from the point of the paragraph to the quote. The quote and the source don’t always have to be in the same sentence, especially if the title is long or there is a need to elaborate on purpose of the quote. The sentence in which the Author and the Source Text is introduced also includes an explanation or extrapolation preemptively. The brackets will show the deconstruction of this format:

Often, black women are perceived to be enduring, and it becomes the watchword for behaviors – many times to their detriment. [Corliss D. Heath] [discusses this in] [“A womanist approach to understanding and assessing the relationship between spirituality and mental health,”] [pointing to the
intersection between race, spirituality, and mental health, and whether those needs are met]. She writes, [“...due to the subjection of the ‘strong Black woman syndrome’ (carrying a heavy load often at the expense of her own well-being), some Black women would rather die than appear as complaining or not being able to cope” (156).]

**Quoting Dialogue**

Generally, when quoting dialogue, you’ll be referencing film or literature. What the general consensus is while quoting dialogue, is that the format should look similar to this:

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[Text] [Character] [scene/situation] [in reference to/how this is significant] [quote] [optional – extrapolate meaning from the quote within the sentence]
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Or, in the case of dialogue between two or more characters:

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[Text] [Character] [scene/situation] [context]

[BLOCK QUOTE]

[extrapolate meaning in a separate sentence]
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**Longer Quotes vs. Block Quotes**

Not all longer quotes need to be formatted as block quotes. If a quote is over four lines of prose and over three lines of verse, and you decide that it is absolutely necessary to use it in your essay, format it as a block quote. If not, consider how long the quote needs to be. Filling up space with block quotes interrupts the flow of the essay if not done effectively. Formatting for a block quote should go like this:

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In “Reclaiming Our Africanness in the Diasporized Context: The Challenge of Asserting a Critical African Personality,” Prof. George J. Safa Dei explores the construction of Pan-Africanism and the importance of it throughout his journal. He establishes the relevance, saying:

Part of our survival can be rooted in the African Indigenous knowledge systems that work with an African spiritual epistemology as a spiritual way
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of knowing, centering the inner self/environment, and making connections with the outer group/environment. This spiritual epistemology is an affirmation of the power of a spiritual dialogue that calls on us to reclaim our spirituality along the path to a spiritual recovery from the “spirit injury’, depersonalization of selves and the negation of part of one’s humanity (e.g., history/culture). (48)

Something to Consider

The thing about quotes that is hard to recognize is that, beyond defining something or expanding the reader’s knowledge or affirming your credibility, you as the writer must demonstrate that you can analyze the quote as well. Quotes should not just fill up space. If you cannot delve into the implications of your own quote and how it impacts/supports your stance, then that is not a quote you should be using. Analyzing quotes isn’t as intimidating as it might be, conceptually. Once you pull relevant information from the quote or think critically about how the quote might be relevant to your topic, then you’ve analyzed it.

Supplementary Sources

https://style.mla.org/citing-dialogue-from-a-novel/
http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide/intext