# MLA Quoting

What is quoting?
Quoting is the use of someone else’s exact words as evidence or as an example within a paragraph. They are not original to the writer using them. A quote should only be used if it relates to the topic within the paragraph it appears. Quotes will be formatted differently, depending on their length. Whether the quote is short or long, it is important not to simply add a quote without integrating it properly into the paragraph. Quoting is useful in giving authority to a writer’s argument or in demonstrating a counter argument. They can work to emphasize an important topic, give an example, or explain a concept. A good quote can give the writer credibility and support their argument.

How to quote**:**

* Lead into the quote with your own words by acknowledging the source or discussing the topic.
* Provide the quote exactly as the author wrote it, using quotation marks around all words and phrases that are not yours.
* Quote only what is necessary to your argument. Do not misrepresent a quote.
* Use ellipses (…) when omitting words from the original quote, and use brackets around added words not original to the quote.
* Include an in-text citation at the end of the sentence followed by the appropriate punctuation mark (see MLA In-Text Citation handout).
* Provide some explanation, reflection, etc. after the quote by relating it to your topic or claim.

A standard way to lead into the quote is to introduce the source and follow-up with the quote. (Note: If leading into the quote with the author’s last name or first word(s) from the full citation on the works cited page, it will not be needed in the in-text citation).

According to Mary Sherry, “Tens of thousands of eighteen-year-olds will graduate this year and be handed meaningless diplomas” (761).

Add variety by using a quote in the middle of a sentence, not the end. The in-text citation still appears at the end of the sentence.

By using “the trump card of failure,” teachers can better prepare students for the future (Sherry 762).

Split up a quote to incorporate it within your sentence. Use brackets to change a word in the quote to make it fit grammatically in the sentence.

There are “parade[s] of students” going into their college careers that Sherry identifies as being “angry and resentful for having been passed along until they could no longer even pretend to keep up” with the information being taught in higher education (762).

# Block Quotes

While quotes are normally meant to be shorter, longer quotes that exceed four lines should be formatted differently. These long quotes are known as block quotes, and their use suggests that all information within the quote is vital to proving or explaining the writer’s point. Block quotes will require more analysis or explanation after the quote to give the reader a full understanding of the quotes importance.

* Lead into the quote followed by a comma. If you introduce the quotation with a full sentence, use a colon instead of a comma.
* Place the quotation in a free-standing block of text, indented one-half an inch further than the paragraph.
* Omit quotation marks.
* Only indent the first line of the quotation by an additional quarter inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs.
* Include the in-text citation after the closing punctuation mark.

**Example:**

Bringing back the prospect of failing students once again can work to improve learning; however, it will not be an easy process:

Making it work again would take a dedicated, caring conspiracy between teachers and parents. It would mean facing the tough reality that passing kids who haven’t learned the material…dooms them to long-term illiteracy. It would mean that teachers would have to follow through on their threats, and parents would have to stand behind them, knowing their children’s best interests are indeed at stake. (Sherry 763)

As the article suggests, turning failure into a successful learning tool is going to take a lot more work, not just on the student’s part, but it will also require the cooperation of teachers and their parents….

**\*To avoid quoting while still including outside material, try paraphrasing which involves putting a quote in your own words. For more on this, see the paraphrasing handout.**