**Integrating Quotations into Sentences**

Never have a quotation standing alone as a complete sentence, or, worse yet, as an incomplete sentence, in your writing—aim for a smooth transition from your own words to another source. Quotations are like helium balloons. When you let go of a helium balloon: it flies away. In a way, the same thing happens when you present a quotation that is standing all by itself in your writing, a quotation that is not "held down" by one of your own sentences. The quotation will seem disconnected from your own thoughts and from the flow of your sentences. Ways to integrate quotations properly into your own sentences are explained below.

**There are at least four ways to integrate quotations.**

**1. Introduce the quotation with a complete sentence and a colon.**

Example: In "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," Thoreau states directly his purpose for going into the woods: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Example: Thoreau ends his essay with a metaphor: "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in."

Example: Albert Einstein reminds us all to never waste our life being selfish: “Only a life lived for others is worth living.”

If you use a complete sentence to introduce a quotation, you need a colon after the sentence. Be careful not to confuse a colon **(:)** with a semicolon **(;)**. Using a comma in this situation will most likely create a comma splice, one of the serious sentence-boundary errors.

**2. Use an introductory/signal or explanatory phrase, but not a complete sentence, separated from the quotation with a comma.**

Example: In "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," Thoreau states directly his purpose for going into the woods when he says, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Example: Thoreau suggests the consequences of making ourselves slaves to progress when he says, "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us."

Example: Thoreau asks, "Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life?"

Example: Homer Simpson shouted, “I am so smart! I am so smart! S-M-R-T! I mean, S-M-A-R-T!”

Use a comma to separate your own words from the quotation when your introductory/signal or explanatory phrase ends with a verb such as "asserts," "states," "thinks," "believes," "pondered," "recalls," "questions," and "asks" (and many more). You should also use a comma when you introduce a quotation with a phrase such as "According to Thoreau."

**3. Make the quotation a part of your own sentence without any punctuation between your own words and the words you are quoting.**

Example: Thoreau argues that "shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous” (236).

Example: According to Thoreau, people are too often "thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails” (45).

Example: Adolf Hitler comes to with Shakespeare’s assertion that “madness in great ones must not unwatched go” (Jackson 45).

Notice that the word "that" is used in three of the examples above, and when it is used as it is in the examples, "that" replaces the comma which would be necessary without "that" in the sentence. You usually have a choice, then, when you begin a sentence with a phrase such as "Thoreau says." You either can add a comma after "says" (Thoreau says, "quotation") or you can add the word "that" with no comma (Thoreau says that "quotation.")

**4. Use short quotations--only a few words--as part of your own sentence.**

Example: In "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," Thoreau states that his retreat to the woods around Walden Pond was motivated by his desire "to live deliberately" and to face only "the essential facts of life” (22).

Example: Thoreau argues that people blindly accept "shams and delusions" as the "soundest truths," while regarding reality as "fabulous” (45).

Example: Due to the fear of the unknown, Hamlet believes most men choose to “grunt and sweat under a weary life” instead of taking their own lives (246).

When you integrate quotations in this way, you do not use any special punctuation. Instead, you should punctuate the sentence just as you would if all of the words were your own. No punctuation is needed in the sentences above in part because the sentences do not follow the pattern explained under number 1 and 2 above: there is not a complete sentence in front of the quotations, and a word such as "says," "said," or "asks" does not appear directly in front of the quoted words.

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| **5. Paraphrasing**  In some cases one can avoid direct quotation by paraphrasing the quote—that is, by restating what the author says in one’s own words (not looking at the quote when you are paraphrasing may help with this). To avoid plagiarism, you must be sure to (a) use your own words whenever you don't use quotation marks or block a quote and (b) cite your sources, especially if the ideas or information you are paraphrasing are not common knowledge, are specific to that author, or include specific numbers or other very specific information. *Always cite the source of the paraphrased material*. Just because it is in your own words does not make it your intellectual property. To not cite would be plagiarism. For example:   |  | | --- | | Shweickart points out that women have had a strong voice in literature since the middle of the nineteenth century (209). As a result, it is striking that our literary tradition is still so gender specific. |  * When quoting lines of poetry up to three lines long (which are not indented), separate one line of poetry from another with a slash mark. (/) * If for the sake of brevity you wish to omit material from a quoted passage, use ellipsis points (…) to indicate the omission. * You may *alter the closing punctuation of a quotation* in order to incorporate it into a sentence of your own. (“Books are life,” Lawrence emphasized.) * When quoting, you may alter grammatical forms such as the tense of a verb or the person a pronoun so that the quotation conforms grammatically to your own prose—indicate these alterations by placing brackets around the changed form. In the following quotation “her” replaces “your” of the original so that the quote fits the point of view of the paper (3rd person).   When he hears Cordelia’s answer, Lear seems surprised, but not confounded. He advises her to  “mend [her] speech a little.” He had expected her to praise him the most, but compared to her  sisters’, her remarks seem almost insulting. (1.1.95)  Sources: 2009 UW-Madison Writing Center  Rambo, Randy. Integrating Quotations into Sentences, 1 Aug 2004. |

**Practice: Choose one of the following quotes:**

Author: Ray Charles -- “I never wanted to be famous. I only wanted to be great.”

Author: Dick Clark – “Music is the soundtrack of your life.”

Author: Homer Simpson – “Remember that as far as anyone knows, we’re a nice normal family.”

Author: Indira Ghandi – “Where there is love, there is life.”

Author: Red Barber – “Baseball is dull only to dull minds.”

Author: Vince Lombardi – “If winning isn’t everything, why do they keep score?”

YOUR TURN:

* Choose one quote from above and write it on your paper.
* Number your paper 1-4.
* Write a **complete sentence** with **an attribution** and a **quotation** using each of the four ways to integrate quotations described.