

Integrating Quotations

A quotation is a reference or citation to a source. A direct quotation uses the exact words of a source and must be identified in your paper with quotation marks and parenthetical documentation. Even a single significant word taken from a source must be quoted.

General Instructions

Keep quotations to a minimum: a short phrase or sentence is more emphatic than a long quotation.

- Look for the "kernel" or the most important part of the quotation, and extract it.
- Paraphrase a portion of the quotation in your own language when possible.

Overusing quotations can result in "patchwork" writing, a jumble of miscellaneous information from various sources that is merely pieced together. Quotations should fit logically into **your** text; **you** assert control over **your topic** by integrating quotations that help support **your point**. Do not allow quotations (or any source material for that matter) to control the presentation of your paper. Remember, the shorter the quotation, the more emphasis it will receive in your draft.

Discussion

We will use the following passage for discussion.:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Jefferson, Thomas. "The Declaration of Independence." Rpt. in *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*.
Eds. Sylvan Barnet & Hugo Bedau. Boston: Bedford, 1990. 460-463.

Examples

Does not synthesize quotation (needs revision):

Thomas Jefferson believed that there were certain rights that could not be taken away. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson 461).

Attribution precedes quoted material (mediocre):

In the *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson claims, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (461).

Using *that* (source material as noun clause) (mediocre):

In the *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson claims that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson 461).

Attribution inserted into quoted material (mediocre):

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," Jefferson asserts in the *Declaration of Independence*, "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson 461).

Introducing material with some paraphrase (good):

Jefferson opens the Declaration of Independence asserting that all people are guaranteed specific rights, including "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (Jefferson 461).

Final Reminders:

- 📎 Do not quote when a paraphrase or summary will do.
- 📎 Always provide a context for your quotations.
- 📎 Always attribute your quotations to the original author.