

Writing with Sources

In your essays you may be required to find **textual evidence** to help you prove your thesis. This means you will have to incorporate **quotes**, **paraphrases**, and **summaries** of your sources into your writing.

Using textual evidence helps you prove your points. It puts you in conversation with other scholars on your topic, and it also puts the expertise of other scholars to work for you.

You may use three kinds of textual evidence in your essays: summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotes.

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Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

HOW TO SUMMARIZE

Use summaries to describe work your readers haven't read so that they will understand your argument. Summaries condense an extended idea or argument into a sentence or more in your own words. Use summaries to report the gist of an author's idea.

Exercise 1. Summarize in one sentence the following quotation from an official government report on the "digital divide":

Original quotation:

The following examples highlight the breadth of the digital divide today:

- Those with a college degree are more than eight times as likely to have a computer at home, and nearly sixteen times as likely to have home Internet access, as those with an elementary school education.
- A high-income household in an urban area is more than twenty times as likely as a rural, low-income household to have Internet access.
- A child in a low-income white family is three times as likely to have Internet access as a child in a comparable black family, and four times as likely to have access as children in a comparable Hispanic household.

—US Department of Commerce, *Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide*, p. 7

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According to the Department of Commerce, college educated, high-income people from white families are much more likely to have a computer and internet access than less educated minorities from lower income households (7).

HOW TO QUOTE

Use direct quotes from your primary text to illustrate and support your analysis. Use direct quotes from your secondary sources only when the words of your own paraphrase would not be as effective or meaningful.

For your third essay, you must cite all of your sources using a form of documentation called MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation style. This means that you will have to **cite** your quotes and paraphrases within your essay a specific way.

Here's how to properly document your quotes:

Use **parenthetical citations** to document your quotes and paraphrases. At the end of each quote or paraphrase, write the source author's last name and the page number the cited passage is from, as follows.

- Incorporate quotes grammatically within the body of your paragraphs (Davis 123).
- If a quote is over four lines long, then you must left-indent the entire quote within your paragraph. Each line of the quote "must be left-indented ten spaces" (456).
- The first time that you cite from a source, you must cite the author's name either in the body of your paragraph or in the parenthetical citation (Smith 1).
- If you have already mentioned the author's name in your paragraph or in a previous parenthetical citation, then you need write only the page number in parentheses, not the author's already mentioned name (100).

HOW TO QUOTE

For example, here is a quote from an essay by Joyce Carol Oates used in a sentence:

Like many modern authors, Joyce Carol Oates has a very stern view of human affairs, claiming that "modern life is seriously distorted" (225).

And here is the same quote in a sentence that does not mention the name of Oates:

Many modern authors have a very stern view of human affairs, claiming that "modern life is seriously distorted" (Oates 225).

HOW TO QUOTE

When using direct quotes from your sources you must incorporate them into the grammatical flow of your own writing. You do this by using **signal phrases** that often include **helping verbs**:

One common **error** a lot of people make when they include a quote is that they tend to put the quote in a sentence by itself.

Unfortunately, we cannot do this because we are then giving the quote without a specific analytical context.

We need to use a **signal phrase** to introduce the quote and give our readers a context for the quote that explains why we are taking the time to include it in our essay.

HOW TO QUOTE

Take, for example, this section from a paper on Frederick Douglass's slave narrative, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*:

We can see Douglass' marriage as an assertion of his ownership of himself. "What Douglass's certificate of marriage, which is transcribed in full in chapter 11, signifies is that the black man has repossessed himself" (Baker 170).

In the above example, the quote from an essay by the critic Houston A. Baker, Jr. thrusts itself into the flow of the paper, disturbing readers because there is no warning that the quote is coming.

HOW TO QUOTE

Yet, with a **signal phrase**, we can make the use of the quote seem more natural to readers:

We can see Douglass' marriage as an assertion of his ownership of himself, as the critic Houston A. Baker, Jr. argues in his essay "The Economic of Douglass's Narrative": "What Douglass's certificate of marriage, which is transcribed in full in chapter 11, signifies is that the black man has repossessed himself" (170).

By including a reference to Baker and his essay in the sentence before giving the quote, we let the reader know that we are using someone's opinion to support our own, giving the quote a context that the reader finds relevant to our overall point.

HOW TO QUOTE

When you are quoting from a work of fiction such as Oates's story, you still need to use a **signal phrase**, often to put the quote in its context. Below we have an improperly dumped quote that confuses the reader, leaving her unsure about both the quote's connection to the first sentence and its place in the story:

Connie retreats from Arnold Friend into the safety of her home. "The kitchen window had never had a curtain, after three years, and there were dishes in the sink for her to do—probably—and if you ran your hand across the table you'd probably feel something sticky there" (Oates 1233).

Without a signal phrase, the reader does not know where this quote fits into Oates's short story, why the kitchen is being described, and how the quote relates to the first sentence.

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When you are quoting from a work of fiction such as Oates's story, you still need to use a **signal phrase**, often to put the quote in its context. Below we have an improperly dumped quote that confuses the reader, leaving her unsure about both its connection to the first sentence and its place in the story:

Connie retreats from Arnold Friend into the safety of her home. However, upon reaching the kitchen, she realizes that nobody in her house has been doing the work of making it a proper home: "The kitchen window had never had a curtain, after three years, and there were dishes in the sink for her to do—probably—and if you ran your hand across the table you'd probably feel something sticky there" (Oates 1233).

By including a transition ("however"), the word "kitchen," and a little plot summary, we link the quote to the first sentence.

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2. With a partial sentence ending in a helping verb, followed by a comma.

Douglass explains that Auld's prohibition against literacy for him was a profound experience, noting, "It was a new and special revelation" (29).

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Douglass explains that Auld's prohibition against literacy for him was a profound experience, noting, "It was a new and special revelation" (29).

3. With a statement that ends in "that."

The importance of Auld's prohibition to Douglass is clear when Douglass states that "it was a new and special revelation" (29).

HOW TO QUOTE

You can build your own signal phrases by mixing these three basic styles with helping verbs that describe your source's attitude towards the subject of the quote.

Here is a list of such verbs, as well as other phrases you can use: admits; agrees; argues; asserts; believes; claims; compares; confirms; contends; declares; denies; emphasizes; insists; notes; observes; points out; reasons; refutes; rejects; reports; responds; replies; suggests; thinks; writes; In _____'s words; According to _____'s (notes, study, narrative, novel, etc.)

Exercise 2. Using a signal phrase, revise the following quote on a separate sheet of paper so that it fits better with the flow of the writer's sentence:

Joyce Carol Oates believes that films do not have to follow the stories upon which they are based. Jerry Lyman, a film critic, agrees with this view and "a good film director is never a slave to a writer" (53).

Here is a list of helping verbs, as well as other phrases you can use: admits; agrees; argues; asserts; believes; claims; compares; confirms; contends; declares; denies; emphasizes; insists; notes; observes; points out; reasons; refutes; rejects; reports; responds; replies; suggests; thinks; writes; In _____'s words; According to _____'s (notes, study, narrative, novel, etc.)

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Joyce Carol Oates believes that films do not have to follow the stories upon which they are based. Jerry Lyman, a film critic, agrees with this view; "a good film director is never a slave to a writer" (53).

Exercise 3. Using a signal phrase, revise the following quote (spoken by Connie) on a separate sheet of paper so that it fits better with the flow of the writer's sentences:

In Joyce Carol Oates's short story, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", Connie complains about how much her mother criticizes her. "She makes me want to throw up sometimes" (1124).

Here is a list of helping verbs, as well as other phrases you can use: admits; agrees; argues; asserts; believes; claims; compares; confirms; contends; declares; denies; emphasizes; insists; notes; observes; points out; reasons; refutes; rejects; reports; responds; replies; suggests; thinks; writes; In _____'s words; According to _____'s (notes, study, narrative, novel, etc.)

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In Joyce Carol Oates's short story, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", Connie complains about how much her mother criticizes her, telling her friends that "[s]he makes me want to throw up sometimes" (1124).

Exercise 3. Using a signal phrase, revise the following quote (spoken by Connie) on a separate sheet of paper so that it fits better with the flow of the writer's sentences:

In Joyce Carol Oates's short story, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", Connie complains about how much her mother criticizes her. She declares to her friends, "She makes me want to throw up sometimes" (1124).

In Joyce Carol Oates's short story, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", Connie complains about how much her mother criticizes her, screaming, "She makes me want to throw up sometimes" (1124).

Exercise 4. Often, you must tell your reader how to interpret your quote. Revise the following sentences so that the quoted material isn't just 'dumped' after the first sentence. You will have to add signal phrases and transitional words to do so.

Many authors maintain that a good film should be true to the literature it is based on. "True, a filmmaker is often inspired by a story that she read. However, a good filmmaker does not let that story determine the kind of film she wants to make" (Lyman 52).

Here is a list of helping verbs, as well as other phrases you can use: admits; agrees; argues; asserts; believes; claims; compares; confirms; contends; declares; denies; emphasizes; insists; notes; observes; points out; reasons; refutes; rejects; reports; responds; replies; suggests; thinks; writes; In _____'s words; According to _____'s (notes, study, narrative, novel, etc.)

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Many authors maintain that a good film should be true to the literature it is based on. Jerry Lyman partly agrees with this view. He grants that "a filmmaker is often inspired by a story that she read," yet he still insists that "a good filmmaker does not let that story determine the kind of film she wants to make" (52).

In the essay you will compose this week, you will have to incorporate quotes from Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going? Where Have You Been?" into your body paragraphs using signal words and phrases, and MLA parenthetical citations, like this:

Connie is shocked by Arnold's claims that he is her lover and the filthy words that flow from his mouth, telling him "people don't talk like that, you're crazy" (Oates 1232). Yet despite Arnold's threatening words and strange appearance, which includes a boot "pointed out to the left, bent at the ankle" (1233), Connie ultimately leaves with Arnold. The first things she sees upon leaving home are the "vast sunlit reaches of the land behind him and on all sides of him" (1236). She will never return home again.

Exercise 5. Using a signal phrase, revise the following dumped quote from the story so that its connection to the preceding sentence is clear:

Connie realizes that Arnold is not the young man he claims to be. "His whole face was a mask" (Oates 1233).

Here is a list of helping verbs, as well as other phrases you can use: admits; agrees; argues; asserts; believes; claims; compares; confirms; contends; declares; denies; emphasizes; insists; notes; observes; points out; reasons; refutes; rejects; reports; responds; replies; suggests; thinks; writes; In _____'s words; According to _____'s (notes, study, narrative, novel, etc.)

Exercise 5. Using a signal phrase, revise the following dumped quote from the story so that its connection to the preceding sentence is clear:

Connie realizes that Arnold is not the young man he claims to be. **As she explains**, “[h]is whole face was a mask” (Oates 1233).

Connie realizes that Arnold is not the young man he claims to be **because** “[h]is whole face was a mask” (Oates 1233).

Exercise 6. Using signal phrases and perhaps a little plot summary, revise the following dumped quotes from the story so that they become part the writer’s own sentences:

In Joyce Carol Oates’s story, “Where Are You Going? Where Have You Been?”, Connie notices several strange things about Ellie Oscar. “[H]e wasn’t a kid either—he had a fair, hairless face, cheeks reddened slightly as if the veins grew too close to the surface of his skin, the face of a forty-year-old baby” (1231). The creepiest thing she sees is that Ellie never stops listening to the little radio perched on his shoulder. “Ellie’s lips kept shaping words, mumbling along, with the words blasting in his ear” (1231). Ellie’s strange appearance and behavior makes Connie feel dizzy.

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Exercise 6. Using signal phrases and perhaps a little plot summary, revise the following dumped quotes from the story so that they become part the writer’s own sentences:

In Joyce Carol Oates’s story, “Where Are You Going? Where Have You Been?”, Connie notices several strange things about Ellie Oscar. **As she realizes when he finally turns to face her**, “he wasn’t a kid either—he had a fair, hairless face, cheeks reddened slightly as if the veins grew too close to the surface of his skin, the face of a forty-year-old baby” (1231). The creepiest thing she sees is that Ellie never stops listening to the little radio perched on his shoulder. **Even while Arnold is yelling at him**, “Ellie’s lips kept shaping words, mumbling along, with the words blasting in his ear” (1231). Ellie’s strange appearance and behavior makes Connie feel dizzy.

HOW TO PARAPHRASE

You do not want to quote everything that you cite. As a general rule, quotes should never take up over 1/3 of a paragraph—although sometimes they may (if a quote is over four lines long then the entire quote should be left-indented). When you want to cite a specific passage of a story or article but do not want to quote it then you must paraphrase it, which means write the passage in your own words.

HOW TO PARAPHRASE

When we quote a passage, we do so in order to analyze how a specific effect works in the text. If there is no clear effect that we wish to discuss, we may want to simply paraphrase the key incidents or details of a passage so as to avoid slowing down our own writing with the words of someone else. Paraphrase is most useful when you want to present or examine an author’s line of reasoning but don’t feel the original words merit direct quotation.

HOW TO PARAPHRASE

We need to be careful when we paraphrase, though. We have to create a sentence that uses a different sentence structure and language. If our paraphrase contains elements that are a word-for-word match to the source text or so close that it is difficult to tell the difference, we could be charged with **plagiarism** because it looks like we are trying to steal the words or ideas of someone else.

HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or words as your own. Every summary and paraphrase that you write must be in your own words. If you are using someone else's words, you must quote them and cite them. If you are using someone else's ideas in your summaries or paraphrases, you must cite them.

HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

Exercise. Identify the terms copied in the passage plagiarized from Jessica Mitford's book below.

Original: The character and mentality of the keepers may be of more importance in understanding prisons than the character and mentality of the kept. (From Jessica Mitford's *Kind and Usual Punishment*, page 9).

Plagiarized: But the character of prison officials (the keepers) is more important in understanding prisons than the character of prisoners (the kept).

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Plagiarized: But the character of prison officials (the keepers) is more important in understanding prisons than the character of prisoners (the kept).*

*(and there is NO citation and no signal phrase, which also makes this passage plagiarized)

HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

Original: The character and mentality of the keepers may be of more importance in understanding prisons than the character and mentality of the kept. (From Jessica Mitford's *Kind and Usual Punishment*, page 9).

Plagiarized: In understanding prisons, we should know more about the character and mentality of the keepers than of the kept.

Correctly paraphrased: As Mitford argues in *Kind and Usual Punishment*, it could be of more value to analyze who jailkeepers are and what they think than to analyze who their prisoners are or what they think (9).

Exercise 8. Paraphrase the quote below. Remember, in a paraphrase you must rewrite the original passage in YOUR OWN words. As with a quote, you also must introduce your paraphrase with a signal phrase. (And don't forget the parenthetical citation!)

Here is Joyce Carol Oates's description of Arnold from her movie review of *Smooth Talk*.

"There is no suggestion in the published story that 'Arnold Friend' has seduced and murdered other young girls, or even that he necessarily intends to murder Connie."

From Joyce Carol Oates, "Short Story Into Film," page 13.

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Oates's does not imply that Arnold friend is a serial killer who wants to kill Connie (13).

As Oates points out in her review of *Smooth Talk*, her story does not imply that Arnold friend is a serial killer who wants to kill Connie (13).

Exercise 10. Paraphrase the quote below on a separate sheet of paper. Remember, in a paraphrase you must rewrite the original passage in YOUR OWN words. As with a quote, you also must introduce your paraphrase with a signal phrase. (And don't forget the parenthetical citation!)

The twenties were the years when drinking was against the law, and the law was a bad joke because everyone knew of a local bar where liquor could be had. They were the years when organized crime ruled the cities, and the police seemed powerless to do anything against it. Classical music was forgotten while jazz spread throughout the land, and men like Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie became the heroes of the young. The flapper was born in the twenties, and with her bobbed hair and short skirts, she symbolized, perhaps more than anyone or anything else, America's break with the past.

From Kathleen Yancey, *The Roaring Twenties* (1989): 25.

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From Kathleen Yancey, *The Roaring Twenties* (1989): 25.

As Kathleen Yancey observes in her book, *The Roaring Twenties*, the decade of the 1920s was a lawless and culturally transformative time. While alcohol was illegal, it could be readily found in neighborhood pubs. Law enforcement was unable to counter the influence of criminal syndicates in the nation's urban areas. Young people stopped listening to classical music and turned to jazz instead, lionizing musicians such as Beiderbecke, Armstrong and Basie. Women called flappers cut their hair short and their skirts shorter, a perfect emblem of how the nation was moving swiftly away from its cultural traditions (25).

USE QUOTES, PARAPHRASES, AND SUMMARIES TOGETHER

Writers frequently intertwine summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. As part of a summary of an article, a chapter, or a book, a writer might include paraphrases of various key points blended with quotations of striking or suggestive phrases as in the following example:

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In his famous and influential work *On the Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud argues that dreams are the "royal road to the unconscious" (12), expressing in coded imagery the dreamer's unfulfilled wishes through a process known as the "dream work" (95). According to Freud, actual but unacceptable desires are censored internally and subjected to coding through layers of condensation and displacement before emerging in a kind of rebus puzzle in the dream itself (66).