The Writing Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Integrating Direct Quotations

One way to incorporate source material in academic writing is to directly quote the source in order to retain the meaning and credibility of the original and capture its exact language. This is different than paraphrasing, which allows writers to maintain an authorial voice without the interruption of a direct quotation.

For most citation styles, using direct quotations requires a parenthetical citation following the quote. Below are examples using the most common in-text citation styles, APA and MLA.

Direct Quote with an Introductory Element
  If the quotation is introduced with a brief signal phrase, a comma precedes it:

  • Patton (2002) argues, "In the last couple of years, the widespread interest in and knowledge about the stock market has provided rich opportunities for metaphoric discussions" (p. 96).

Direct Quote as Continuation of the Sentence
  When the quotation is a continuation of the writer's sentence, there is no need for any punctuation before the quotation. In this case, the sentence, including the quotation, should read as a complete sentence. Note that at the end of the sentence, the period goes outside of the parentheses:
  • Patton believes that by using metaphor, teachers can come to a "more complex understanding of evaluation" (94).

Direct Quote within a Sentence
  When integrating a direct quotation in the middle of a sentence, all of the above punctuation rules apply. However, if you want to continue your sentence after the quote, you use a comma. Note that this comma is placed within the quotation mark:
  • In his critique of program evaluations, Patton argues the "small, community-based initiative is likely to be riskier, but if it works, the incremental difference to the

  community may be great," finally concluding that there should be a confluence of the type of evaluation and the purpose for the evaluation (98).

Direct Quote as Independent from the Sentence
  A writer can choose to set up a quotation with a complete sentence in order to add emphasis to the quoted material. In this instance, a colon precedes the quotation:
  • Kevin Short explains that there is a direct relationship between social unrest and the death of the American dream: "A declining faith in the American Dream has gone hand in hand with the stagnation of wages and in turn, the shrinking of the middle class" (105).

Direct Quote of a Source's Quote

Sometimes the source text also uses quotes, and you may wish to quote the source along with part of their quoted material. In this instance, begin quoting the source with double quotation marks and use single quotations around the source's quoted material. Note that internal quotation is concluded with a single quotation mark and a double quotation mark signals the end of the main quote; in this example, all three come at the end:

- According to Patton: "In teaching and training with metaphors, we draw upon Thoreau's insight that 'all perception of truth is the detection of an analogy'" (98).

Punctuation, Emphasis and Spelling from the Source

Always preserve the source text's punctuation emphasis, and spelling. Punctuation should be left **inside** the quotation mark. Note that although both of the following quotations end with punctuation inside the quotation marks, it is still necessary to use a period after the citation:

- In their comprehensive study on nursing, researchers asked, "how can nurses' roles be more comprehensively utilized in rural medical clinics and sparsely populated regions?" (Tanaka, 2014, pg. 7).
- Dorothea Brooke exclaimed "What a wonderful little almanac you are, Celia!" to her sister (58).

Punctuation Not Belonging to the Source:

As opposed to commas, which go inside the quotation marks even if they do not belong to the quotation, semi-colons, colons, and dashes go outside of the quotation. In the example below, a semicolon is placed outside the quotation mark because there was no semicolon in Samaranch's report. It was added so that a separate comment could be made after the quote:

- As Samaranch notes in his report, "Water is a good thing to have around"; these are such simple words with an extremely important message.

For further information on related concepts, please see the following handouts:
- Integrating Paraphrase
- Introducing Source Material

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