Guidelines for Citing Quotations

Many beginning writers are tempted to produce papers that are nothing more than a string of quotations. Use **direct quotations** when an authority’s words carry weight, when the quotation is concise and has great impact, or when it would be impossible to restate as effectively in your own words. Follow these guidelines:

- While copying information onto a note card, be sure to put quotation marks around any directly copied material. *To avoid plagiarism*, you need to know whether you had copied or whether you already had paraphrased or summarized the research in order to insert the information into the final copy honestly.

- A note for a direct quotation changes *nothing* from the source. Spelling, punctuation, words — everything — must be on the note card exactly as it appears in the source. (If a word is misspelled or incorrectly used, add the Latin word *sic* in brackets [sic], meaning “thus,” to show the reader that the error is not yours.)

- Remember that in most cases **no more than 20% of your paper should be quoted** material. Too many quotations make your paper choppy.

- When you do use quotations, blend them into your own sentences smoothly. Write your own material or lead-in before and adequate follow-up material after a direct quote. Use transitions to tie the ideas together coherently.

- To use just part of a long quotation, use the **ellipsis** (a series of 3 periods separated by a space between each, like this: . . .)

**EXAMPLES**

- **Example: Partial quotation:**
  
  Earlier labeled the “Rodney Dangerfield of the environment” (Moore 234), wetlands are gaining respect as an integral part of life’s interdependence.

- **Example: Full sentence quotation:**
  
  Along the lower Mississippi valley, only 20% of the wetlands once covered with hardwood forest remains, and an additional 100,00 acres disappear every year. “Since 1950 over 4.5 million acres of wetlands have been lost in the Mississippi flyway alone.” (Smith 43).

- **Example: Quotation indirectly used by a source you are quoting:** If what you are paraphrasing or quoting is itself a quotation, put the abbreviation qtd. in (“quoted in”) before the indirect source you cite in parentheses).

  Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” (qtd. in Boswell 2: 450).

- **Example: Extended Quote:** If a quotation runs to more than 4 lines of typing, set this **extended quote** off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting 10 spaces or 2 tabs from the left margin, and typing it double spaced, without adding quotation marks. A **colon** generally introduces a quotation or a listing displayed this way.

  The terms categorizing wetlands, however, still do not completely define them. As one writer explains the problem:

  There is no generic swamp. Rather there are acid swamps, cedar swamps, river swamps, bay swamps, blackgum swamps, and cypress swamps. There are fens in Massachusetts, bogs in Maine, prairie potholes in the Dakotas, and sea grass beds and mangrove forests in Florida (Booth 13).

  To further complicate the problem of clear definition, wetlands change, becoming marshes, wet meadows, eventually perhaps shrub- or tree-filled swamps (Nierling, “Swamp” 8) . . . .