

The Writing Lab

Direct Quotations

Handout courtesy of Angela Gulick

A direct quotation is a word-for-word, 100% accurate presentation of original information. You have to be very careful with direct quotations that they match the original information **exactly**. This handout will walk you through the steps of creating effective direct quotations.

Step 1: Decide what information you want to use.

Make sure there is a **logical connection** between what you have already written and the direct quotation you choose to include. You will need to explain what this quoted information is intended to illustrate or argue.

Step 2. Create a signal phrase for the **first time** you use the quoted information.

The signal phrase should include the full name(s) of author(s), the "Article Title in Quotation Marks with All Major Words Capitalized," and the page or paragraph number. Here are some examples:

In "The Reality of the Fashion Industry: Project Runway," Harold White writes, " _____ " (66).

Harold White, author of "The Reality of the Fashion Industry: Project Runway," writes, " _____ " (66).

According to Harold White, author of "The Reality of the Fashion Industry: Project Runway," " _____ " (66).

Here is an example with two authors:

Dominique G. Ruggieri and Elizabeth J. Leebron, authors of "Situation Comedies Imitate Life: Jewish and Italian American Women on Prime Time," argue, " _____ " (par. 6).

Here is an example with three authors:

Sakari Lemola, Thomas Ledermann, and Elliot M. Friedman, authors of " Sleep Duration Related to Subjective Sleep Quality and Subjective Well-Being," write, " _____ " (44).

Here is an example with four or more authors: When you have four or more authors, provide the first author's name followed by "et al.," which stands for "and others."

Daniel Benton, et al., authors of "Vampire Bats and Rabies: An Ecological Solution to a Public Health Problem, claim, " _____ " (par. 11).

Step 3. Create a signal phrase for the **second, third, fourth times** you quote information.

The signal phrase should include just the last name(s) of author(s) and the page or paragraph number.

One Author: White also states, " _____ " (68).

Two Authors: Ruggieri and Leebron also write, " _____ " (par. 9).

Three Authors: Lemola, Ledermann, and Friedman also comment, " _____ " (48).

Four or More Authors: Benton, et al. also argue, " _____ " (par. 14).

Step 4. If information is fewer than four complete typed lines, do the following:

If a quotation is fewer than **4 typed lines**, you keep it in the text of the paragraph and enclose it with "double quotation marks."

Step 5. If information is 4 or more complete typed lines, do the following:

If a quotation is **4 or more typed lines**, it is called a block quotation and is set off from the rest of the text by being indented one inch from the left. Here is an example:

In “Pun Work Helps English Learners Get the Joke,” Kristin Lems states the following: <<<**Note the lead-in to the block quotation is a complete sentence with a colon.**

Indent a block quotation 1 inch from the left margin. Omit quotation marks, and put the period before the page or paragraph number.

Humor also helps bring people together through shared frames of reference, which are often framed through the jokes told. When English learners learn humorous English words and phrases as part of their language study, it can help their metalinguistic awareness, or conscious awareness of the forms of language; this, in turn, is positively associated with literacy development. (2)

Step 6. Assemble your signal phrases and your quoted information.

Special Uses of Punctuation with Direct Quotations

Using Single Quotation marks

Use single quotation marks when you have a quotation enclosed **within** a larger quotation. Here are 2 examples:

Flora Arnold wrote, “My favorite quotation is from Yogi Berra, who said, ‘**I didn't really say all of the things I said**’ ” (14).

Flanders and Jacobs write, “According to a 2008 study, marriage counselor Judy Bowen argues, ‘**Marriage preparation is extremely important in a society that emphasizes fleeting relationships**’ illustrating that as a culture, a premium is put on permanent monogamous relationships” (par. 19).

>>>In these examples, each has a quotation that exists within the larger “direct quotation.” To indicate these quotations within quotations, **‘single quotation marks are provided.’**

Using Other Forms of Punctuation with Quotation Marks

The following chart will help you know how to incorporate other points of punctuation:

Punctuation Point	Location with Quotation Marks
Periods (.)	Periods go inside quotation marks >>> “____.” The only exception is if you have information in parentheses at the end of quotation >>> “____” (16).
Commas (,)	Commas always go inside quotation marks >>> “____,”
Semicolons (;)	Semicolons always go outside quotation marks >>> “____”;
Colons (:)	Colons always go outside quotation marks >>> “____”:
Question Marks (?) Exclamation Points (!)	If the entire sentence containing the quotation is a question or an exclamation, put the punctuation point outside the quotation marks. If just the quotation itself is the question or exclamation, put the punctuation point inside the quotation marks.

Adding Information to a Direct Quotation

Use **[brackets]** to indicate anything **you** have added to a quotation to improve clarity or correctness:

Original: Kate Hostager, author of “Tales from My Fiction Class,” states, “After taking his class for a few weeks, he couldn’t believe he had made such progress” (39). >>> We don’t know who “he” and “his” refer to, so bracketed details clarify matters.

Revised: Kate Hostager, author of “Tales from Fiction Class,” states, “After taking **[Dr. Martone’s]** class for a few weeks, **[Jon]** couldn’t believe he had made such progress” (39).

Original: According to Jarrod Littleton, author of “Building a Nest Egg,” “Those who offer economic advice state that **investing** in retirement funds such as Roth IRAs should be the top priority for young adults” (11).

Revised: According to Jarrod Littleton, author of “Building a Nest Egg,” “**[I]**nvesting in retirement funds such as Roth IRAs should be the top priority for young adults” (11). >>> The “i” in “investing” needed to be capitalized because it is now the first word of the sentence.

Removing Information from a Direct Quotation

Use ellipses (. . .) to indicate anything you have removed from a direct quotation. **You cannot remove something that substantially changes the quotation’s meaning.** If you end a quotation before the end of the original sentence, include ellipses to indicate that omission. Otherwise, you don’t need ellipses at the beginning or the end of a sentence.

Original quotation: Marshall writes, “After running around all day, Lily collapsed into a chair, feet and head throbbing, wondering why she always felt so exhausted in the evenings” (25).

Omission in the middle of a sentence: Marshall writes, “After running around all day, Lily collapsed into a chair . . . wondering why she always felt so exhausted in the evenings” (25).

Omission at the end of a sentence (because the end of the sentence was omitted): Marshall writes, “After running around all day, Lily collapsed into a chair . . .” (25).

>>> In this case, the original sentence didn’t end until the words “in the evenings.” Because this sentence got “cut off” before it naturally ended, the borrower of this information has indicated that by adding the ellipses . . . before the final page number.