

Mastering the Essay

Lesson 7 – The Research Paper, Part 3: Writing Your Paper, Citing Your Sources

READINGS

- “Excerpts from The Epigrams” (Martial)
- “Plagiarism—What It Is and How to Avoid It” (Indiana University Bloomington)
<https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/plagiarism.html>
- “MLA Formatting Quotations” (Purdue Owl)
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_quotations.html

Review MLA Citation from Week 5:

- “MLA In-Text Citation: The Basics” (Purdue Writing Lab)
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html
- “Citing a Book (MLA)” (Purdue Writing Lab)
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_page_books.html<https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/mla-format/how-to-cite-a-bible-mla/>
- “Citing a Periodical (MLA)” (Purdue Writing Lab)
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_periodicals.html
- “Citing a Web Source (MLA)” (Purdue Writing Lab)
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_electronic_sources.html
- “Citing an Interview or Personal Communication” (MLA) (Purdue Writing Lab)
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_works_cited_other_common_sources.html
- “How to Cite the Bible” (EasyBib, Chegg)
- <https://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/mla-format/how-to-cite-a-bible-mla/>

CITING YOUR RESEARCH

- When should you cite your research?
 - **When the information you are describing is not common knowledge/was not something you knew before researching it.**
 - **When you quote a source.**
 - **When you paraphrase someone else’s words.**
 - **When you summarize something from someone else’s work.**
- Ideas are common, and no one holds a monopoly on them. However, their particular way of expressing their viewpoint on an idea remains their intellectual property. You do not need to cite simply because you are writing about the same topic as some other author. It is also important to cite your sources so that your reader knows where to find more information about a topic. Proper citation may seem burdensome and pedantic, but it is

really one way to "love your neighbor" (your reader) by being considerate, honest, and helpful. It is better to over-cite than under-cite.

- Proper introduction, formatting, and citation protects both the original author and the person citing it.
- In this class, we will focus on learning MLA style even though it is typically only used in literary subjects. It is the easiest of all the common styles to learn, and the other styles (Chicago, APA, etc.) are similar enough that if you master MLA, you can learn the others easily later on.

How to use a quotation:

- Quotations are one of the most important tools we can use to back up theses. The trick is to use them to highlight the merits of our own writing not to replace it.
- Short quotes can be integrated right into the paper, but long quotes need to be formatted as "**block quotes**." See the Purdue OWL website on "Formatting Quotations."
- **All quotes need introductory phrases or sentences!** Never just plop a quote into your writing unexpectedly—introduce it and let the reader know it's coming! For instance you might mention the author's name, and use language to indicate a quote is coming up. For example:
 - In the words of philologist Seo Jang-Geum, "I shall eat a ham sandwich."
 - Jean-Pierre O'Higgins was known to remark, "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain."
 - Some, like Margaret Dashwood, have suggested that "piracy is our only option."
 - **Three ways to introduce a quote:**
 - There are three ways to integrate a quotation into a sentence. They are equally correct, though certain methods may be preferable—for style and for brevity—in certain situations.
 - 1) **Use a comma.** This method is generally used when the speaker of the quotation is identified. In such cases, the comma usually follows a verb indicating speech or dialogue. (Ex. says, "...", states, "...", asks, "...")
 - *Example: Speaking to Keller, Annie explains, "words can be her eyes, to everything in the world outside her, and inside too" (Gibson 92).*
 - 2) **Integrate the quotation "seamlessly."** This method requires that the quotation fit into the sentence naturally, almost as if the introduction and the quotation itself were spoken by the same voice. Often a seamless integration follows the subordinating conjunction "that." *Example: Speaking about the importance of language to Helen, Annie explains that "words can be her eyes, to everything in the world outside her, and inside too" (Gibson 92).*
 - 3) **Use a colon (but only after an independent clause).** A colon tells the reader that what follows is closely related to the preceding clause. Thus, you should indicate or summarize at least part of the content that follows a colon. *Example: Speaking to Keller, Annie emphasizes the importance of language to Helen: "words can be her eyes, to everything in the world outside her, and inside too" (Gibson 92).*

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- **Never assume a quotation speaks for itself!** You should have at least one sentence (and probably several more!) commenting on the quotation and connecting it to the main thread of your argument. Explain what it means in context of your essay, or the ramifications it has. For example:
 - Some, like Margaret Dashwood, have suggested that “piracy is our only option.” In other words, they believe that when one’s relatives come to seize control of one’s ancestral estate and fortune, there is little point in pursuing honest means of making a living.
- **Altering a quote:** Sometimes, you need to change a quote slightly to make it fit with the flow of your paper. If you do, it is important for the sake of academic honesty to make it clear to the reader you are doing so. The three most common ways are:
 - *Ellipses.* If you leave something out of a quotation, indicate you have done so with an ellipsis—three dots. “He is a most elegant gentleman ... and delights us all with his refined tastes.” Make sure that leaving out the part of the passage does not alter the meaning of the quote, just makes it more concise. Don’t leave out inconvenient sections or make it look like the author is saying something he’s not.
 - *Square brackets.* Occasionally it can help to clarify a quotation by adding or changing a word, especially if the quotation becomes less clear without the sentences preceding it. In this case, one may add or change a word by encasing the new word in square brackets. “[Mr. Pickwick] found himself in an awkward position.”
 - *Added emphasis.* If you wish to call the reader’s attention to certain words in a quote, you may emphasize them with italics as long as you make it clear to the reader that you have added the italics. “The Canadian government, *not the Canadian taxpayer base*, is at fault for this madness” (emphasis my own).

When should you quote? (adapted from University of Toronto)

- The focus of your essay should be on your understanding of the topic. If you include too many quotations in your essay, you will crowd out your own ideas. Consider quoting a passage from one of your sources if any of the following conditions holds:
 - **1) The language of the passage is particularly elegant or powerful or memorable.**
 - **2) You wish to confirm the credibility of your argument by enlisting the support of an authority on your topic.**
 - **3) The passage is worthy of further analysis.**
 - **4) You wish to argue with someone else’s position in considerable detail.**
- Condition 3 is especially useful in essays for literature courses.
- If an argument or a factual account from one of your sources is particularly relevant to your paper but does not deserve to be quoted verbatim, consider:
 - **paraphrasing** the passage if you wish to convey the points in the passage at roughly the same level of detail as in the original
 - **summarizing** the relevant passage if you wish to sketch only the most essential points in the passage

As you continue writing your research paper, think of it as an argumentative essay with an emphasis on providing evidence from sources. You already know how to write such an essay—you are just adding on an extra layer of credibility.

Assignment

Write the research paper you outlined last week. Your essay should be at least six paragraphs long (intro, four body paragraphs, conclusion). Remember to keep your audience in mind as you write: what needs to be explained more? how will you make the topic interesting and accessible? Be careful to cite all of your sources whether or not you quote them or merely paraphrase/summarize them. You must use at least two quotes in your essay—make sure that you introduce it and connect it to your work. Your research paper should include the bibliography at the end *without* the annotations.