



Integrating Quotations into Your Paragraphs

Writers often use quotations, or material directly taken from another source, to support their ideas. However, quotations and paraphrasing usually do not stand alone in their own sentence. Rather, they should be integrated into a passage that explains the context and meaning of the quote. Use the strategies listed below to integrate quotations into your writing.

Writers usually use a combination of four methods to integrate quotes:

- **Introduce** the quote in a way that relates to your claim, in order to provide some context and background for the quote.
- **Lead in** to the quote and its source (e.g. "according to" or "Kincaid writes," etc.). Note that the introduction and lead-in may occur together.
- **Quotation** should be written exactly as it is in the source. Omission of a word or phrase should be indicated by ellipses. At times it may be more effective to paraphrase a quote rather than stating it directly.
- **Comment** on or explain the significance of the quote in the context of your argument.

Examine the following excerpts and notice how the writer integrates the quote into his/her own writing. The font of the quotations is bolded for clarity.

Example 1: In discussing the role of movies in shaping the American public's view of the Vietnam War, H. Bruce Franklin makes this telling statement: "**The manipulation of familiar images [about the war]... was blatant, though most critics at the time seemed oblivious to it.**" The manipulation of these images created an image in the minds of most Americans, who now pictured helicopters, the music of Wagner and the Doors, and Russian roulette as substitutes for the reality of the war. The media created a different Vietnam in the minds of Americans.

This example can be broken up according to the 4 methods for integrating quotes:

Introduce: In discussing the role of movies in shaping the American public's view of the Vietnam War

Lead in: H. Bruce Franklin makes this telling statement:

Quotation: "**The manipulation of familiar images [about the war]... was blatant, though most critics at the time seemed oblivious to it.**"

Comment: The manipulation of these images created an image in the minds of most Americans, who now pictured helicopters, the music of Wagner and the Doors, and

Russian roulette as substitutes for the reality of the war. The media created a different Vietnam in the minds of Americans.

Here, “[about the war]” was written into the quote by the writer of the essay, not the author of the quote. This type of bracketing is useful for inserting necessary detail or changing grammar, but should be used sparingly.

Ellipses (...) are used in the quote above because part of the quote has been omitted. (Ellipses are not required immediately after the opening quotation mark or before the closing quotation mark).

The following examples do not separate the different parts as visibly as the first example:

Example 2: Writing can be very rewarding. As Ellen Goodman, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and social commentator, has remarked, **“It’s like cleaning house, getting rid of all the junk.”**

In Example 2, there is no extensive comment required to get a main point across, so the only parts included in this example are the introduction, lead, and quote.

Example 3: Steve Jobs likes to describe the difference between television and the Web as the difference between **“lean-back”** and **“sit-forward”** media. The networked computer makes you lean in, focus, engage, while television encourages you to zone out.

As in Example 3, you can use quotes to introduce terms that have been coined by a person. In this case, the introduction and lead in are combined and the comments occur immediately after the quote. The quote is not a sentence, but rather several words.

Example 4: We know that the human brain is highly plastic; neurons and synapses change as circumstances change. When we adapt to a new cultural phenomenon, including the use of a new medium, we end up with a different brain, says Michael Merzenich, a pioneer of the field of neuroplasticity. That means our online habits continue to reverberate in the workings of our brain cells even when we’re not at a computer.

Integrating paraphrases of quotes can be a useful strategy as well. Although the writer has rephrased the quote instead of using the author’s exact words, he or she used the same parts - introduction, lead in, and comments – to integrate the paraphrase.