

# To quote or not to quote?

## Rules for Quoting:

1. Put quotation marks around the exact words of the author.
2. If you leave words out of the middle of a sentence you are quoting, use an ellipsis . . . (three periods) to show something is missing.
3. If you add words to a quote to make it clearer, your words must be in brackets like this: [example].
4. Be sure to mention the author's name either before or after the quote. One mention of the name is enough even in a long quote of more than one sentence or a whole paragraph.

## When Not to Quote:

If a student writer is trying to show a professor that the student understands an issue, it is better not to quote. Expressing an author's ideas in the student's own words is the best way to show that one understands what the author is saying. If the student does not understand the author's ideas, the student should choose another source of ideas.

When students express one or two ideas from an article in their own words, it is called *paraphrasing*. Paraphrasing the words of another may take just as many words as the original. When students use their own words to condense the important ideas of an article into one paragraph, that is called *summarizing*. Paraphrasing and summarizing are done best by:

1. Reading the original twice
2. Laying it aside out of sight,
3. Letting one's memory recall the points of the article in one's own words.

## A Warning:

Many journal articles begin with an abstract: a preview of the important points of the article to give the readers an idea of what they will be reading. It may be tempting to copy the abstract and use it as a summary of the article, but remember that whenever a writer copies someone else's words and pretends they are his own, the writer is committing plagiarism. The punishment for plagiarism at IU Southeast is failing the course for which the paper was submitted.



## When to Quote

Many inexperienced writers think that it is easier to quote a source than to paraphrase or summarize it. Perhaps they feel the source has said something so perfectly that they cannot improve on the author's original words.

However, quoting should be reserved for passages that are so specific that to use any words but the author's original ones would be just ridiculous. Quoting from famous inspirational speeches by leaders of the past makes sense. Quoting from President Kennedy's inaugural address is quite appropriate.

It is also possible that an author, whether famous or not, has written something so perfectly that a student writer cannot improve on it and so feels compelled to use the author's exact words. Beware of doing this too often, for it shows a lack of confidence in one's own ability to express ideas.

## Quoting in MLA

### Short quotes in MLA:

In MLA, a short quote is **four lines or less**. A short quote is typed as part of a paragraph but is **enclosed in quotation marks**. “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” (Kennedy 37). Notice that the **period comes after the parentheses** in a short quote.

### Long quotes in MLA:

In MLA, a long quote must take up **more than four lines** of your page. In MLA, a long quote is **indented one tab on the left**. Notice that in a long quote the **period comes before the parentheses** and not after:

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. (Kennedy 37)

### Tell your reader where to find source:

#### Work Cited

Kennedy, John F. “Inaugural Address.” Little Brown Publishers, 1961.

## Quoting in APA

### Short quotes in APA:

In APA, a short quote is **forty or fewer words**. A short quote is typed as part of a paragraph, but is **enclosed in quotation marks**. “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” (Kennedy, 1961, p. 37). Notice that the **period comes after the parentheses** in a short quote.

### Long quotes in APA:

In APA, a long quote must be **more than forty words**. In APA, a long quote is **indented one tab on the left**. Notice in a long quote the **period comes before the parentheses** and not after them:

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. (Kennedy, 1961, p. 37)

### Tell your reader where to find source:

#### Reference

Kennedy, J.F. (1961). *Inaugural address*. New York: Little Brown Publishers.