



ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE

MLA FORMAT QUOTATIONS

Adapted from *A Writer's Reference*, 8th edition, by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers

In academic writing, we emphasize our own ideas by paraphrasing or summarizing information from other sources and then analyzing that information in our own words. Direct quotations are most effective when a writer wants to

- add authority to an argument
- explain technical concepts
- include especially vivid or powerful language
- analyze the language of a source.

Avoid dropping quotations into a paper without introduction. Prepare the reader for the borrowed material with a brief introduction, often called a *signal phrase*. The signal phrase usually names the author of the source and provides some context for the quote. Use a variety of signal phrases and sentence constructions to make your writing more interesting.

Common Signal Phrase Verbs

acknowledges	claims	emphasizes	reasons
adds	comments	explains	reports
agrees	compares	insists	responds
argues	confirms	notes	states
asserts	contends	observes	suggests
believes	declares	points out	writes

Short Quotations

Integrate quotations of *four lines or less* into a paper with a signal phrase, usually including the author's name. Double space the quoted text and enclose it in quotation marks. Follow the quotation with the page number in parentheses *before* the end punctuation. (Note: for a source without page numbers, there will be no parenthetical citation if the author has already been introduced in the signal phrase.) Writers do not always need to quote full sentences from a source. You can choose the most important parts and integrate them into your own sentence.

Example

According to popular author Malcolm Gladwell, successful people have “hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities and cultural legacies that allow them to learn and work hard and make sense of the world in ways others cannot” (19).

Long/Block Quotations

Set off a quotation of *more than four typed lines* of prose (or more than three lines of poetry) by indenting it one inch (ten spaces or two tabs) from the left margin. Continue double spacing but do not use quotation marks. Integrate the long quotation into the paper by introducing it with an informative sentence followed by a colon. Follow the quotation with a parenthetical citation one space *after* the end punctuation. (For a source without page numbers, there will be no parenthetical citation if the author has already been introduced in the signal phrase.)

Example

Gladwell argues persuasively that success is more than an individual accomplishment:

People don't rise from nothing. We do owe something to parentage and patronage. The people who stand before kings may look like they did it all by themselves. But in fact they are invariably the beneficiaries of hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities and cultural legacies that allow them to learn and work hard and make sense of the world in ways others cannot. It makes a difference where and when we grew up. The culture we belong to and the legacies passed down by our forebears shape the patterns of our achievement in ways we cannot begin to imagine. (19)

Corresponding Works Cited page entry:

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little, Brown, 2008. Print.