UCLA UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER

Integrating Quotations into Your Writing

Writers often use quotations, or material directly taken from another source, to support their ideas. Quotations and paraphrases should not stand alone in their own sentences; rather, they should be integrated into a passage that explains their context and meaning. Use the strategies listed below to integrate quotations into your writing.

Selecting a Good Quotation:

A good quotation offers evidence in support of a claim. The quotation should include relevant material that adds something original to the paper. Good quotations often include striking language, the words of an expert, or important information that cannot be paraphrased. The goal is to include a piece of someone else's writing in order to augment and support your own. But you should not include a quotation just for the sake of quoting.

Evidence vs. Summary vs. Analysis:

Quotations should offer evidence that can be analyzed. It is easy to slip into summary when quoting. Summary is simply restating the information from the quotation you have included. Instead of summarizing, try to take a small but relevant portion of that text and describe how it fits into your own ideas and arguments, using the words from the quotation to build up to your own argument.

How to Integrate a Quotation:

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

the context of your argument.

Examine the following excerpts and notice how the writers integrate quotations into their 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:

- **Introduction:** 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 quotation by the writer of the essay, not the author of the quotation. This type of bracketing is useful for inserting necessary detail or changing grammar, but should be used sparingly.

The following examples do not separate the different parts as clearly 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-in, and quotation.

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 quotations 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 quotation. The quotation is not a sentence, but rather specific words.

Example 4: The human brain is highly plastic; neurons and synapses change with circumstance. **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 paraphrased source material can be a useful strategy as well. Although the writer has rephrased information from the original text instead of using the author's exact words, he or she used the techniques outlined above--introduction, lead-in, and comments--to integrate the paraphrase.*

Takeaways:

- The role of a quotation is to offer evidence using the words of someone else that can be analyzed in the writer's own words to support their argument.
- It is important to avoid summarizing a quote, which would just be repeating what the quote is already saying. Instead, analyze relevant parts of the quote to build your argument.
- There are 4 strategies for introducing a quotation: introduction, lead-in, quotation, and comment.