



Quoting Smoothly

When using quotations in a paper, the quotation should become a part of your own sentence. Here are some tips to help you produce this seamless effect.

Set up the quotation with a sentence of your own, ending it with a colon, followed by the quotation.

Jenny knows she is doing the wrong thing when she asks him to marry her. She is aware of the possible negative outcome of her actions, but proceeds nonetheless: "I can't help myself, even though I know I might ruin Alice's life by doing this" (Wir 304).

Precede a quotation with signal words—such as "explains," "illustrates," or "continues"—followed by a comma. Remember that descriptive words like these are usually more interesting than using "says."

In McGinn's short story, the main character proclaims, "I simply cannot live without him" (290).

Incorporate phrases and pieces of a quotation in your own sentence.

Benjamin promised his roommate he "would never think of doing such a thing" and "resented the implication" (74).

Don't just throw a quotation in if it makes the grammar incorrect. You should not write Melissa tells Jason that she wants "to see you perform again" (Lewis 4589). Instead, consider one of these options:

Melissa tells Jason, "I want to see you perform again."

Melissa tells Jason that she wants "to see [him] perform again."

Melissa tells Jason how impressed she is with his with his work: "I want to see you perform again."

Note in the second example that to change the part of speech to make sense grammatically you should bracket the changed word.

You may omit words from a quotation as long as you do not change its meaning. To show that words have been omitted, replace them with three spaced periods – this is known as an ellipsis. For text reading, "She slipped off her clothes, then slipped dramatically into bed, drawing the covers closely over her body" (Smith 78), you could write: "She slipped off her clothes, then slipped . . . into bed, drawing the covers . . . over her body (Smith 78).

When you are dealing with a quote within a quote, use single quotation marks to denote the original quotation and double quotation marks to indicate your own.

For Elisabeth, his departure was expected: "Her eyes were wet. 'I never thought you'd really stay,' she told him. 'I knew you were always deceiving yourself'" (Simpson 90).

Remember that using proper quotation format not only adds polish and smoothness to your paper, it also guards against potential plagiarism.

