

How to Use Direct Quotations

In your research paper use quotation marks to mark the exact words of the author. Direct quotations are not necessarily dialogue. When you use a particularly insightful passage or excerpt from a source (primary or secondary) you mark the author's words with the quotations marks.

1. Do not let direct quotations monopolize the paper. Most of the paper, while based on the ideas of others discovered during research, will be summarized or paraphrased.
2. When using direct quotations, be careful not to take too long a passage. The reader should not lose the writer's "voice" for long. If a fairly long passage is worth quoting directly, break it up, and add comments in between sections of it.
3. Do not let a direct quote stand-alone without supporting words grammatically attached to it. Direct quotes are like bricks; they need cement or glue to join them to the text.

Example:

Incorrect: "Wuthering Heights, of all the novels in the English language, represents the conflict between passion and reason" (Van Ghent 75).

Correct: **According to Dorothy Van Ghent,** "Wuthering Heights, of all the novels in the English language, represents the conflict between passion and reason" (75).

** Notice that since the author's name was mentioned in the **glue**, only the page number is needed for in-text citation.

4. "**Glue**" may indicate who is speaking the words that are quoted directly. **High quality "glue"** will give the reader some idea of why the passage is being quoted.

Example: **Dorothy Van Ghent points out the basic theme of the novel when she says,** "Wuthering Heights, of all the novels in the English language, represents the conflict between passion and reason" (75).

5. "Glue" must fit grammatically with the direct quotation to which it is attached.
6. The first sentence in a paragraph serves as a topic sentence for that paragraph, and also as a link to the previous paragraph. The topic sentence indicates the ability to organize and should be in your own words. **Therefore, do not open a paragraph with a direct quote.**
7. Do not use two direct quotes back to back. Comments are needed on each quote as it is used to show its relation to the point the writer is trying to make. For this same reason, **a direct quotation should never end a paragraph.**
8. Never have a paragraph that consists only of a direct quote.
9. A direct quote of **five or more** typed lines should be put in **block style**. Block style is when you indent one "Tab". Quotation marks are not necessary; the fact that it is indented makes it obvious that it is a direct quote. In this case, the punctuation comes **before** the in-text citation. The glue leading up to the block style quotation ends with a colon (:) and then you hit enter once and "Tab" in twice.

10. Use single quote marks for any quoted material appearing within already quoted material.

Example: “Tennessee Williams frequently analyzed the relationship between his life and his plays, losing no chance to remind the public that he knew himself to be a ‘deeply disturbed person’” (“Tennessee,” <www.life.com>).

11. In addition to the glue that reveals the speaker of a direct quote, try to make some comment on the direct quote either in the sentence before or after it, to weave it into the ideas you are presenting. What is it that you especially want the reader to pay attention to in that quote? What aspect of it fits the point you are trying to make?

12. When citing verses from plays or poetry of **three lines or less**, use a diagonal / to show where each new line of verse begins, and cite using (author act.scene.lines) or for poetry (author lines)

Example: When she learns that Romeo is a Montague, Juliet exclaims, "My only love, sprung from my only hate!/ Too early seen unknown, and known too late!" (Shakespeare 2.3.67-8).

13. Verse quotations of more than three lines should be indented ten spaces, **block style**, and double-spaced. Each line of the poem or play begins a new line of the quotation; do not run the lines together or separate them with diagonals.

Example:

Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth describes her intentions for Duncan when she states:

Oh Never
Shall Sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is a book where
men
May read strange matters. (1.5. 160)