

IN-LINE (PARENTHETICAL) CITATION

INTEGRATING SECONDARY SOURCE MATERIAL INTO RESEARCH PAPERS

Dr. Jim Werner
English Department, Westchester Community College

Research papers are often called “synthesis” papers, because you need to “synthesize” (blend together) your own words and ideas with those of other people.

This task presents some challenges. You need to do this in a way that leaves NO doubt in the reader’s mind whether the words and ideas are yours or someone else’s. You also need to establish a sense of coherency; your paper should “hold together” as one unified piece of writing, and not “sound” like a jumble of competing voices.

First, you should be aware that there are three main techniques of integrating someone else’s words and/or ideas into your paper, all of which require in-line citation (also known as parenthetical citation):

1.) Summarizing:

When you summarize, you write in your own words the most outstanding point(s) another writer makes. Your summary is usually much shorter than the original, because it only highlights the most important information/ ideas. So you could summarize an entire book in a single paragraph, or even a single sentence.

2.) Paraphrasing:

Paraphrasing is another way of conveying the original author's ideas in your own words. A paraphrase is usually different from a summary in that it simply rephrases a specific line or short passage, rather than condensing a longer passage. A paraphrase of one sentence probably conveys about the same amount of information found in the original-- but again, in your own words.

3.) Quoting:

When you quote a writer directly, you record his or her exact words, exactly as they appear in the original document (with a few exceptions, which we’ll discuss below). That means using the EXACT same spelling, punctuation—you get the idea. You MUST put quotation marks around the material you use from the original!

Quotations from a text give you specific information or “evidence” to support your points; if a particular writer is the topic of your paper, quotations also give your reader a vivid

sense of that writer's thought and style. Direct quotations are most useful when they're especially vivid or memorable, when the exact words are critically important for the point you're making, or when the language itself is the topic of discussion. If none of these apply, you might want to consider using a paraphrase to keep the "voice" of your paper more consistent.

[See the section at the end of this document for examples of effective quotation, paraphrase and summary, as well as an example of plagiarism.]

In-line Citation:

Take a look at the material in parentheses at the end of the following sample sentences:

Debra Winthrop suggests that "we're all potential winners in this game" (365).

Some people feel that "we're all potential winners in this game" (Winthrop 365).

That's called in-line (or "parenthetical") citation. If you're writing a paper for an English class at Westchester Community College, that means you need to use MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation format, which requires BOTH in-line citation AND a Works Cited list (described below).*

In-line citation is important. It provides the reader with just enough information to locate the source in the Works Cited List at the end of the paper. However, it presents only a minimal distraction from the text as someone reads your paper.

You should follow the punctuation in the above models exactly for standard shorter quotations. **Do not** write "page" or "p." or "pp." in your citation; do not use commas or any other punctuation between the author's name and the page number.

*A **Works Cited list** is different from a bibliography; the first lists ONLY the works that you actually cite (quote, paraphrase, etc.) in your paper, while the second lists ALL the works you have consulted (even those you don't quote, etc.) in writing your paper.

Some general hints:

- **Cite ALL quotations (borrowed words) and paraphrases (borrowed ideas), except general/common knowledge. A good rule of thumb: when in doubt, give a citation!**
- **Use signal phrases to integrate your quotations effectively into your paper. Avoid "dropped" or "floating" quotes. "Set up" or "lead into" direct quotations with your own introductory or transitional phrase:**

Incorrect: Evan Smith disagrees. “New teachers are burning out faster” (32).
[“floating” or “dropped” quotation]

Correct: Evan Smith maintains that “new teachers are burning out faster” (32).

One easy way to avoid “drop-in” quotations is to use a full colon (:) if your “lead-in” phrase and quote are both full sentences (independent clauses).

Example: Evan Smith identifies one main problem: “new teachers are burning out faster” (32).

- **Introduce the author and his/her work by full name in your text when you first mention him/her. You might even want to name the work you’re quoting or paraphrasing in this initial mention.**

Example: According to Tom Fielding, author of *Why We Can’t Help Acting Like Monkeys*, human behavior is fairly predictable-- and usually destructive (65).

After that, use only the author’s last name, either in your text or with the page number in the parenthetical citation.

Incorrect: Tom even apologizes to monkeys for insulting them with this comparison (66).

Correct: Fielding even apologizes to monkeys for insulting them with this comparison (66).

- **Always be sure that the sentence incorporating your words and the author’s is grammatically intact.**

Correct: Joe Schmoe describes the play as “the greatest waste of time and money I have ever encountered” (21).

Incorrect: Joe Schmoe, about the play, “the greatest waste of time and money I have ever encountered” (21).

- **To maintain grammatical correctness, you are permitted to alter the quotation in a limited way by using brackets [].**

Original: Every night, I creep down the stairs past my parents’ bedroom door and sneak out the window. (From an essay by Jane Brain, page 4)

Correct: Jane Brain describes how she “creep[s] down the stairs” each night and “sneak[s] out the window” (4).

The reader understands that the original has only been altered to maintain consistency of verb tense here.

- **For quotes longer than four lines of prose text: indent ten spaces (two tabs) for the entire quotation (maintaining double spacing); omit quotation marks at the beginning and end of the quote; and place parenthetical citation outside the period of the last sentence in the quotation, after two spaces.**

Example:

In another tale, “King Pest,” Poe depicts a similarly jumbled, irregular and confusing city which has become depopulated:

The paving-stones, loosened from their beds, lay in wild disorder amid the tall, rank grass, which sprang up around the feet and ankles. Fallen houses choked up the streets. The most fetid and poisonous smells everywhere prevailed;-- and by the aid of that ghastly light which, even at midnight, never fails to emanate from a vapory and pestilential atmosphere, might be discerned lying in the by-paths and alleys, or rotting in the windowless habitations, the carcass of many a nocturnal plunderer arrested by the hand of the plague in the very perpetration of his robbery.

(243)

- **Use these longer quotes SPARINGLY, only to capture style of entire passage.** Include the section of the quotation that’s needed/useful. Don’t use lengthy quotations just to “take up space”!
- **Use ellipses in brackets [...] to “stand in” for words you omit in the middle of a quotation (and if you wish, at the beginning or end of the quoted material). Be sure you stay true to the quote’s original meaning.**

Original: This play was, I have to confess, the greatest waste of time and money I have ever encountered. (from a review by Joe Schmoe page 21)

Incorrect: According to Joe Schmoe, “This play was [...] the greatest [...]” (21).

Correct: According to Joe Schmoe, “This play was [...] the greatest waste of time and money [...]” (21).

- **Use signal phrases (and occasional reminders) also to indicate summaries and paraphrases. Avoid the “lazy paraphrase,” in which you blend another writer’s ideas with your own in a paragraph indiscriminately, and then “slap on” a citation at the end.**

Incorrect—a “lazy paraphrase” (Whose ideas are whose in this paraphrase?):

People need to remember the positive things in their lives to maintain a state of psychological equilibrium. Positive thinking is important for health reasons. Of course, this is not a new idea at all; many doctors have testified to the benefits of an optimistic outlook in fighting diseases like cancer, AIDS and heart conditions. I myself have an aunt whose recovery from heart disease was nothing short of miraculous. Positive thinking can be even more effective than medicine in living a longer, healthier life (Trudeau 33-34).

Correct:

According to Robin Trudeau, essayist and author of *The Half-Empty Cup*, people need to remember the positive things in their lives to maintain a state of psychological equilibrium. Trudeau also emphasizes the importance of positive thinking for health reasons. Of course, this is not a new idea at all; many doctors have testified to the benefits of an optimistic outlook in fighting diseases like cancer, AIDS and heart conditions. I myself have an aunt whose recovery from heart disease was nothing short of miraculous. But Trudeau goes further, asserting that positive thinking can be even more effective than medicine in living a longer, healthier life (33-34).

- **If the author is unknown, use the full title of the work in a signal phrase, or an abbreviated form of that title in the parenthetical citation (that’s how it will be found, alphabetically, in your Works Cited page).**

Examples:

According to the *Olde Booke of Hoggwashe*, the world was due to end April 15, 1999 (97).

Many ancient writers predicted that the world was due to end April 15, 1999 (*Olde Booke* 97).

- **If there are no page numbers (as is the case with many web sites), cite only the author's last name in parenthesis (again, that will direct your reader to find more detailed information on this source, alphabetically, in your Works Cited page).**

Example: The web page for the ASPCA lists ten things you can do to prevent animal cruelty (Smith).

Avoiding Plagiarism:

This section is taken from *Exploring Literature: Writing and Arguing about Fiction, Poetry, Drama and the Essay*, by Frank Madden (Pearson Longman, 2008), and is reprinted by permission of the author.

Plagiarism is taking someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own. The most basic rule of all documentation is that direct quotations and summarized or paraphrased information or ideas from another source must be appropriately credited. This includes information that is not common knowledge (information that you would not have without reference to this or a similar source), information or ideas from another source that you have paraphrased or summarized, and direct quotations from another source.

In the text of the essay itself, you must indicate the author and page number(s) of borrowed information or quotations. On a separate page at the end of the essay, you must include an alphabetized list (Works Cited) of all the sources you have used in the text.

You must always make it clear which words and ideas are yours and which ones come from other sources. Before you submit your essay, check your paraphrases and summaries against the original sources. Make sure that the words and sentences are your own and that they accurately reflect the meaning of the source material. *To use other people's words and ideas and not give them credit is a serious academic offense.*

Examples of Paraphrasing, Summarizing, Quoting, and Plagiarizing

The Original Source

(From Shulevitz, Judith. "The Hall of Fame." Rev. of *Genius*, by Harold Bloom. *New York Times Book Review* 27 Oct. 2002.)

Bloom is not so easily dismissed, however. His style may be disheveled and his book shockingly attuned to the demands of the marketplace, but both have a virtue that trumps those flaws. Bloom's focus on genius is not just commercial opportunism, the usual blather about the moral import of cultural literacy or part of the national obsession with success, though critics will find all three if they go looking for them.

Summarizing

Shulevitz says Bloom's book is stylistically "disheveled" and market driven, but these may be greater strengths than weaknesses. She believes critics will reduce it to these weaknesses if they want to, but the book has greater value than that (11).

Paraphrasing

Shulevitz says Bloom's work remains important even though it seems a bit "disheveled" in style and market driven. She asserts that these features of his writing are actually greater strengths than weaknesses, and that this work is not just an attempt to make money by taking advantage of the public's desire for books about cultural literacy or success. But she believes that critics will be able to reduce the book to these weaknesses if they want to, and ignore its qualities (11).

Quoting

Shulevitz says Bloom's work remains important and adds, "His style may be disheveled and his book shockingly attuned to the demands of the marketplace, but both have a virtue that trumps those flaws" (11).

Plagiarizing

Shulevitz insists that Bloom is not so easily dismissed. He may have a disheveled style and his book is shockingly attuned to the marketplace, but both of these things have a virtue that trumps those flaws.

NEED MORE HELP?

WCC Writing Tutorial
Library G13 • Call: **914-606-7853**
www.sunywcc.edu/student-services/asc/writing-tutorial/

Harold L. Drimmer Library
Call: **914-606-6960** • SMS: **914-861-3315**
answers.sunywcc.edu • www.sunywcc.edu/library •