



Integrating Sources

Many writers have trouble integrating quotations into their essays, and several simple rules exist to make this process easier. A good essay seamlessly flows between the writer's own words and his or her sources, and a developed writer can integrate quotations in a variety of ways.



A Few Rules to Write By

Never begin a body paragraph with a quote. A writer should always have a topic sentence in his or her own words.

Never end a body paragraph with a quote. If this happens, the writer is probably forgetting to explain why the quote is relevant to his or her thesis.

Remember that a body paragraph must have balance. For every sentence quoted, a writer owes the reader at least that number of sentences of explanation.

Introduce all Quotations. Academic writing mandates that all quotes have some form of introduction.

Cite all Quotations. Writers must remember to use academic writing styles when warranted.

Use Block Quotes sparingly. Usually, these quotes require massive amounts of explanation, and it is better for a writer to break a block quote into smaller pieces throughout the essay. Try not to use more than one block quote in a three to four page paper if one is needed.

Do Not Hide Behind Quotes. Professors are not stupid. They can tell when a writer has a strong argument or a paper made of fluff.

A Bad Paragraph: “She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed.” Frequently, in “Araby,” Joyce uses light to show change. The narrator’s house is described as “an uninhabited house of two stories stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbors in a square ground . . . Air musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers” (185). Joyce shows the narrator’s epiphany. “Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and despair” (189).

A Good Paragraph: In “Araby,” Joyce uses light to illustrate the epiphany of the main character. When the narrator sees Mangan’s sister for the first time, Joyce writes, “She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door” (186). This use of light shows contrasts with the author’s earlier use of description. In the first paragraphs of the story, Joyce uses words such as “blind” and “musty” to establish the dreary environment of the narrator. After the narrator sees Mangan’s sister, she becomes a source of light that prevents him from seeing the darkness of his world. After the character realizes that Mangan’s sister did not return his affection, Joyce describes the boy “Gazing up into darkness” (189). Once the character realizes that his love was based on an illusion, he becomes able to see the darkness around him. Joyce uses the light to show readers the change in the young man because he no longer sees the world as a place without darkness, and he understands the dark world around him.

Explanation: In the bad paragraph, the writer does not tell the reader what the paragraph will be about, and his or her MLA is inconsistent, wrong, and frequently absent. In the bad example above, the writer hides behind the quotes and fails to integrate the quotations well. The quotes distract the reader and do not blend well with the writer’s own words. In the good paragraph, the writer uses MLA consistently and smoothly moves between his or her own words and the words of Joyce.

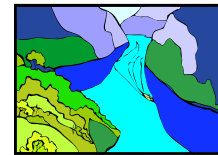
Many Ways to Integrate

Once a writer finds the perfect quote to put in his or her paper, he or she has to decide how to work the quote into the essay. A good essay flows smoothly between the writer's words and the resources the writer has chosen to reference, and if writers take a few minutes to consider how they introduce quotations, their citation style will reflect the difference between an ok writer and a great writer.

Many writers make the mistake of falling into a rut. They either forget to introduce their quotes, or they introduce their sources the same way with words like "says" and "states." Writers, who forget to vary the way they integrate sources or forget to use different words when beginning quotations, appear careless, and their essays often come across as repetitive and boring, and drop-in quotations are the signs of a weak writer who is unfamiliar with the guidelines of academia.

A Bad Integration: Today, many governments slash art funding when they face a budget crises. "The arts are a highly visible target, and cutting them is a symbol of political resolve to solve a difficult problem" (McLennan).

A Good Integration: Today, many governments slash art funding when they face a budget crises. One supporter of the arts, Douglas McLennan, suggests, "The arts are a highly visible target, and cutting them is a symbol of political resolve to solve a difficult problem."



Five Popular Solutions

The "According to" Introduction (A traditional approach)

According to Douglas McLennan, "The arts are a highly visible target, and cutting them is a symbol of political resolve to solve a difficult problem."

The "In the Words of" Introduction (A variation of according to)

In the words of Douglas McLennan, "The arts are a highly visible target, and cutting them is a symbol of political resolve to solve a difficult problem."

The Credibility Introduction (Great for research papers)

In his article, "The End of Arts Funding?," Douglas McLennan declares, "The arts are a highly visible target, and cutting them is a symbol of political resolve to solve a difficult problem."

Total Integration (The most difficult)

Today, many governments slash art funding when they face a budget crises, and Douglas McLennan believes that the arts represent "a highly visible target, and cutting them is a symbol of political resolve to solve a difficult problem."

Using Your Vocabulary (The easiest)

Douglas McLennan maintains, "The arts are a highly visible target, and cutting them is a symbol of political resolve to solve a difficult problem."

Words that Aid Integration

concludes	argues	assesses	demonstrates	implies	contends	describes
suggests	estimates	replies	maintains	indicates	shows	proposes
points out	illustrates	declares				