

Citations, Integrating Sources, and The Art of Quoting
(All rolled into a few overly annotated paragraphs)

When integrating sources, it is important to use a mixture of several techniques to keep your writing style sprightly and interactive. It would be boring to always quote your sources in the same mechanical way. Take, for example, the question of signaling the name of an author and summarizing the main idea of a source. As Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein argue in *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, sometimes simply paraphrasing is the most powerful way to get your point across. On the other hand, at times, “quoting someone else’s [exact] words gives a tremendous amount of credibility to your summary and helps ensure that it is fair and accurate” (Graff and Birkenstein 42). More often than not, you should only quote an author’s exact words if you feel that you could not paraphrase their words just as effectively, or if you wish to capture the style, phrasing, or something special in their writing style and tone.

At times, we will find it necessary to quote an author at length, simply because what they say is very compelling and it takes them the space of 5 or more lines to make their case; we want to show how their argument plays out over the course of a few sentences. In the event that you want to quote a longer passage, it’s necessary to *block quote* this passage. For instance, Graff and Birkenstein introduce the terminology of “hit-and-run” quotations in their third chapter. “Hit-and-run” quotations are passages that writers suddenly quote but then do not explain before moving on to their next point. As the authors explain,

Quotations that are inserted into a text without such a frame are sometimes called “dangling” quotations for the way they’re left dangling without any explanation. One teacher we’ve worked with, Steve Benton, calls these “hit-and-run” quotations, likening them to car accidents in which the driver speeds away and avoids taking responsibility for the dent in your fender or the smashed taillights, as in the figure that follows.¹ (44)

¹ The reason that I chose to block quote this passage rather than paraphrase it, as you may have guessed, is because I found the imagery of the “smashed taillights” and “dent in [the] fender” to be particularly

You'll notice that block quotes are often single-spaced and indented one inch from the left margin. It's important to be selective about what you block quote and to devote a few sentences afterwards to explaining your take on the quote. What do you notice about it? What is your analysis? Which key terms stand out? As a rule, I tend to follow the "sandwich rule," which is yet another metaphor for framing quotes. Always surround your quote with your own words, providing the bread to your "quote sandwich" so that you never quote without first introducing it, and also so that you never end a paragraph hanging with a quote (Graff and Birkenstein 46). Always follow up with your own words.

Footnotes or endnotes are also useful tools for writing a research paper. Footnotes are extended "memos" that are offset at the bottom of a page or at the end of an article where the author gets the opportunity to expand further and go into more detail on a minor point.² Usually one would choose to expand within a footnote or endnote if you think that incorporating this idea in the text of your paragraph would be somehow distracting or provide too much information. Footnotes can also include fun facts or tidbits of information.³

Finally, there are times when you'll find yourself wanting to quote certain words or key terms from an author, but the grammar of the author's sentence just doesn't match yours. This is when you can use brackets [] to help you make changes to the word endings of certain words in a passage. For example, Graff and Birkenstein write that in a quotation sandwich, "the statement introducing it [should serve] as the top slice of bread and the explanation following it [should

memorable. This kind of colorful language helps demonstrate how effective Steve Benton's analogy is and gives force to the "hit-and-run" term that he so wittily coined.

² Footnotes can also direct a reader to further reading. For more on the use of footnotes and endnotes, see Bullock, Brody and Weinberg, *The Little Seagull Handbook*.

³ In Microsoft Word, click on Insert → Footnotes, which will bring you to a screen where you can choose to convert the format of your notes to either Endnotes or Footnotes. Footnotes appear at the end of every page spread out throughout your document, while endnotes appear at the end of an entire paper, all listed in a row. You may choose whichever format you prefer, and switching between one style and the other should not be a problem in your word processor.

serve] as the bottom slice” (46).⁴ You can feel free to make minor changes to an author’s quote, so long as you signal the changes you made by using a bracket. For example, you can change the word “make” into the word “mak[ing]” if that fits better with the grammar of your sentence. Feel free to change and twist a quote to fit the sentences of your own paper, as long as you aren’t mangling it too much and that it is still recognizable through the use of brackets.

⁴ The actual quote says exactly, “To adequately frame a quotation, you need to insert it into what we like to call a ‘quotation sandwich,’ with the statement introducing it serving as the top slice of bread and the explanation following it serving as the bottom slice” (6). It’s very minor, but you’ll see that I had to alter their grammar slightly to match the grammar of my own sentence.

Works Cited

Bullock, Richard, Michael Brody and Francine Weinberg. *The Little Seagull Handbook*. New York: Norton, 2014. Print.

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2014. Print.