# Sources: Quoting

There are many ways to include ideas from outside sources. In this section of the textbook, we will focus on quoting.

Sources are used to add credibility and emphasis to your essay. When you read about your topic to prepare to write, you will want to make notes of specific sources that influenced your position on the topic and the supporting details you chose for support. After you have decided that information from the original source would be best to include word-for-word, you will follow these steps.

## Choosing a quote

The first step is to read about your topic in reputable sources. If you are unsure if a source is trustworthy, talk with either your writing or reading teacher.

While you are reading, create a system for saving the information that is helpful for creating your essay structure and developing your ideas. You may choose to do this with sticky notes, the copy/paste function in a word document, or highlighting. At this stage, you will find larger sections of text that you won't actually use directly in your writing.

Once you have created your essay outline, you can begin to connect these sources you identified as helpful to specific paragraphs.

For quoting, you will need to focus in a small section of the source (up to 40 words, but typically shorter) that will strengthen your main idea and supporting details. Quotes are best used when the original words from a source are:

* already fairly concise and does not need to be condensed
* best supports your topic sentence when preserving the author's original wording and authority
* not easily said in another way
* powerfully stated (highly persuasive or emotional)

Below is an example of an original paragraph-length source which was narrowed down to a relevant and precise quotation that could be added to a paragraph.

### Example: Original Passage with Underlined Quote for Essay

"Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. I am not unmindful of the fact that violence often brings about momentary results. Nations have frequently won their independence in battle. But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones. Violence is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding: it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends up defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers."

[By Martin Luther King Jr., Nobel Lecture in 1964, para. 15](https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/lecture/)

## Introducing a quote

Even though the quotation uses someone else's words, this is still your writing. This means a quote should not just be dropped into the middle of a paragraph. There need to be transitions in and out of a quote to show that it is there for a specific purpose other than to meet the assignment rubric expectation of a certain number of sources. Good writing requires you to show that the source is used strategically to enhance your writing.

The introduction you decide to use for the quote will vary depending on your purpose in using those words. Here are some possible reasons why an author may choose to include a direct quote for support:

* The original author is well-known and respected, so using exact words inspires confidence. Additionally, the author's perspective on the matter is considered to be unique and relevant.
* The source emphasizes information in terms of chronology, meaning that the quote connects a supporting idea to a specific point in time.
* The location of the source adds depth to the position because of the narrow focus of the thesis or to show the scale of the topic.
* The information itself is clearly stated, concise, and strong (or uses very specialized terminology) and says something that needs to be said exactly that way.
* The idea is new, unexpected, or contrary to the common belief that it is necessary to show how it was originally said.

The reason for including the quote can often decide how it would be best introduced. Here are some examples of how each of the above purposes could be introduced based on purpose:

* Author:
  + Latin American liberator Jose de San Martin once said...
  + A close friend of Patch Adams described him as...
* Time:
  + In 2018, the The Sun stated...
  + Just after the incident, an employee of CDC said that...
* Place:
  + Speaking of the Pre-Colonial Philippines, Virgilio S. Almario said...
  + Beijing officials describe the negative impacts of holding the Olympics as...
* Precision:
  + In fact, this idea is described through the words of the Guatemalan national anthem...
  + She explained her own writing best when she said...
* Uniqueness:
  + Surprisingly, some faculty opposed renaming the university building in tribute to him because...
  + Her unpublished stories that were recently discovered provided the following insight...

When you quote information, you copy the information exactly as you found it. You need to put the source material in quotation marks and include the in-text citation in parentheses. See the example below.

### Example: Introduced Quote

In her own words, Clara Lemich stated "I am a working girl... One of those who are on strike against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether we shall strike or shall not strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared now." ().

These introductions preceed the quote to create a bridge between your own supporting ideas and the additional perspective of your source. By smoothy incorporating someone else's words into your own, you remain in control of the essay.

## Commenting on the quote

Just as you needed to create a bridge from your original thought into the direct quote using an introduction, you will need to transition back to your own words. The most effective way to do this is to elaborate on why this quote is relevant. Even if the reasons for including the source feel obvious to you as an author, the cohesion of the paragraph will be much stronger when you include a commentary or reaction to the source before moving into your next supporting thought.

Take a look at the the example quote in a complete context.

### Example: Quote in context

In her own words, Clara Lemich stated "I am a working girl... One of those who are on strike against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether we shall strike or shall not strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared now." (). This quote is a powerful example of Clara's role in inspiring the strike of 20,000 exploited garment factory workers.

Notice that the author does not simply summarize the quote or give an overly general "this is important" response. This quote is contextualized by showing that this fact focused on time and place fits into a larger discussion about causes. Even without seeing the topic sentence, this quote in context signals that the main idea of the pargraph (topic sentence) has to do with learning more about the causes of landslides.

At the beginning of this chapter about descriptive writing, you learned that academic descriptive writing is typically situated within a larger purpose. The use of descriptive supporting ideas and details is to add strength and interest to the thesis. This contextualized quote is an excellent example of how this can be done.

### Tips for quotations

* Do NOT change any of the words or punctuation
  + If a change is necessary for the integration of the quote into the grammar of your sentence, you can use brackets [word] around the word you need to change
* Quotes should not be more than 40 words\*
* Quotes should start and end with quotation marks "word"
* You should include a citation. See the citation section of this textbook for details on how to do this.
* The final punctuation (usually a period) should come after the final parenthesis in the citation
* If you quote only a part of a sentence, you should use ellipses (...) to show where there is information missing.
* Because the quote will be part of your sentence, you will not capitalize the first word of the quotation, even if capitalized in the original source.
* Quotes should come from multiple sources. Relying too heavily on one source can weaken your position.
* Quotes are just one form of including sources. An essay (or paragraph) should include a variety of integrated sources.

\*It is possible to include longer direct quotations, but that is not covered in this textbook.

## Exercises

### Exercise 1: Choosing quotes

The following quotes come from an article about Miguel Hidalgo, a famous Mexican revolutionary leader. Read the example topic sentences below and choose short quotes from these paragraphs that could be used to support each topic sentence.

1. Since he was young, Miguel Hidalgo showed intelligence.
2. Miguel Hidalgo was bravebecause he daredto defend his country.
3. At the time and before of the independence war, Miguel Hidalgo was loyal to his   
   nation and people.

Source:

"Hidalgo was the second child born to Cristóbal Hidalgo and his wife. He studied at a Jesuit secondary school, received a bachelor’s degree in theology and philosophy in 1773 from San Nicolás College (now Michoacán University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo) in Valladolid (now Morelia), and was ordained a priest in 1778. He had an uneventful early career, but in 1803 Hidalgo assumed his recently deceased elder brother’s duties as parish priest in Dolores (now Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato state). His interest in the economic advancement of his parishioners—for example, through the introduction of newer methods of agriculture—and his political convictions regarding the oppression of the people by the Spanish authorities caused the latter to regard him with suspicion." ([The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2022, "Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla," para. 2)](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Miguel-Hidalgo-y-Costilla).

"While Hidalgo’s exact words are debated, scholars generally agree that he challenged his people to throw off the yoke of European colonial oppression and to refuse to remain slaves of Napoleon (who then occupied Spain in the First French Empire). He chanted “Death to bad government!” with such vociferous conviction, that each year on Sept. 15, the President of México initiates the following day’s independence ceremonies with a reenactment." [(The National Bell Festival, n.d., "What is Mexico's Grito de Dolores?," para. 4)](https://www.bells.org/blog/what-mexico-grito-de-dolores).

"On the morning of September 16, 1810, the priest Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla summoned the town of Dolores Hidalgo, through the ringing of the bells of his church, to rise up in arms against the domination of the Spanish." ([Agroasemex, 2019, "209th Anniversary of the beginning of the Independence of Mexico," para. 1, translated from Spanish](https://www.gob.mx/agroasemex/articulos/209-aniversario-del-inicio-de-la-independencia-de-mexico?idiom=es)).

### Exercise 2: Introducing Quotes

Choose one of the individuals below. After skimming the article, practice choosing and introducing a quote in each of the following ways:

1. Time
2. Place
3. Precision
4. Author

[Lucy Stone](https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/lucy-stone)

[Gabriel Garcia Marquez](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gabriel-Garcia-Marquez)

[Genghis Khan](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Genghis-Khan)

[Bessie Coleman](https://www.biography.com/explorer/bessie-coleman)

[Maria de Lurdes Mutola](https://olympics.com/en/athletes/maria-mutola)

[Yi Soyeon](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Yi-Soyeon)

### Exercise 3: Create commentary

The following quotes come from research about Martin Luther King Jr. Add commentary for each of the quotes to connect them to the topic sentence. These quote commentaries should be independent of each other. You are not writing a paragraph.

TS: Martin Luther King Jr. was remembered for being a nonviolent reformer.

1. "King became synonymous with nonviolent direct action as he worked to overturn systemic segregation and racism across the southern United States" [(Miller, 2018, para. 2)](https://time.com/5101740/martin-luther-king-peaceful-protests-lessons/).
2. "I am not unmindful of the fact that violence often brings about momentary results. Nations have frequently won their independence in battle. But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones." ([King, 1964, para. 15](https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/lecture/)).
3. "The experience of these last few days has deepened my faith in the relevance of the spirit of nonviolence if necessary social change is peacefully to take place." ([History.com Editors, 2022, para. 12](https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr))
4. "Dr. King often said, he got his inspiration from Jesus Christ and his techniques from Mohandas K. Gandhi. These principles should be embraced as a lifestyle." ([The King Center, n.d., para. 9](https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/the-king-philosophy/)).

### Exercise 4: Use a Quotation

Use the source information and original quote to create an in-context quote. You should choose a small part of this quote, introduce that part of the quote, and then add commentary.

**Source**:

Jane Goodall InstituteAuthor: No name listedDate: No DateTitle: Our StoryWebsite:  Paragraph 1

**Original:**

"When she discovered that the survival of their species was threatened by habitat destruction and illegal trafficking, she developed a breakthrough approach to species conservation that improves the lives of people, animals and the environment by honoring their connectedness to each other" (The Jane Goodall Institute, n.d., "Our Story," para. 1).

Read this online at <https://edtechbooks.org/academic_b_writing/quoting>