

Using Sources Fairly and Effectively

Fairness to fellow writers and your readers requires that you always inform a reader when you use ideas and/or exact words from a source and then direct that reader to where she or he can find that source.

Whenever you use an idea or exact words from a source, you must cite your source twice: once in what is called a “parenthetical citation” and a second time on a “works cited” page (or list for online texts). These works cited citations are often called “bibliographic citations.”

1. Parenthetical (in-text) citation

A writer uses parentheses at the end of a sentence to indicate that she has used ideas or words from a source in a sentence.

How are citations formatted?

The parentheses come at the end of the sentence and should be outside any quotation marks but inside the period.

In these times of difficulty, only the courageous can imagine “a vision of a new American utopia” (Freeley 142).

In rare cases—the use of multiple authors and/or sources in a paragraph—you may need to move the parenthetical citation from the end of the sentence to closer to where you use the source in the sentence.

Critics of the candidate found her “unqualified for the highest office in the land” (Archer 12), but her admirers described her as a “vital force for change” (Diffner 22).

You also might want to move the citation closer to the source if you are mixing summary of the source with your own analysis of or response to the source:

Diffner contends that the candidate symbolized a powerful set of cultural values (Diffner 24), but Governor Palim seems to have influenced many voters who do not share her values.

What should the writer include in the parentheses?

Inside the parentheses, the writer should include the name of the author of the source text (if there is not author, use an abbreviated form of the article or web site title) and the page or page numbers. Do not include any abbreviation for page numbers; simply list the page numbers.

Basic citation of single author: ...and so “times have changed” (Morefins 72).

Citation when author is mentioned in text: According to Morefins, “times have changed” (72).

Multiple Authors: ... and no one can describe “the agony of cognitive dissonance” (Parker and Zoltop 43).

An article or web page with no author name: ...so the odds are that “we all will melt like the polar icecaps” (“Frigid Dreams” 64)

A source without pagination: use the author’s name or the abbreviated title without a page number.

Indirect quotation: McWillaims referred to California as “the great exception” because he saw it as an unprecedented shift in American cultural history (qtd. in McSorley 560-64).

2. Using Sources in Your Paper: Paraphrasing and Direct Quotation

When you use an outside source in your own work, you have two choices of how to use that information:

Paraphrasing is putting information from a source into your own words. You do not use quotation marks, but you must still use parenthetical citations and a works cited page to show where the information came from.

Direct quoting is using the exact words from a source, just the way the author wrote them. You must use quotation marks, as well as parenthetical citations and a works cited page. No matter how common the knowledge, if you use the author's exact words (even just a short phrase) you must use quotation marks and appropriate citation.

To use a quote well, keep it short and relevant: use the quote to support or develop your own ideas. Effective writers also use integration and attribution.

Integration is making a quoted phrase part of your own sentence. Incorporated quotes flow much more smoothly and are more professional-sounding than quotes that just sit there by themselves. The key to strong integration is mixing paraphrase with short chunks of direct quotes.

Attribution is putting a phrase into your own sentence that shows who said the quote or where it came from. Attribution is a good way to integrate quoted material into your own sentence. **Works cited note:** even with attribution, you need to include a works cited page with the source information for any quote or paraphrased information. The parenthetical citation isn't enough by itself.

Useful attribution phrases: (X = name of quoted author)

- According to X,
- as X notes, points out, asserts, suggests, contends, etc.,
- X, a (fill in qualifications), argues, contends, suggests, maintains, declares, etc.
- In (title of X's book), X explains / argues / suggests that...

Here is a set of examples based on a passage from page fifty-eight of Shannon Diffner's *California Dreamin: A Valley Girl's Nightmare*.

Original Source: "In my life, the California "dream" has been a nightmare of materialist greed, sexist objectification, emotional isolation, and vehicular incarceration. Only when I moved off the grid to a two-hundred acre cucumber farm in Western Idaho did I begin to understand the horrors that I had subjected myself to in the "golden state."

Paraphrased: For some Californians, the realities of life here have driven them to seek new paradises in places like Idaho that do not confront their residents with the same disappointments (Diffner 58)

Note that the paraphrase is much shorter than the original and is phrased very differently. This is what you should always try to do in your paraphrases.

Direct quote, well integrated: Social forces like "materialist greed" and "sexist objectification" can contribute to the disillusionment described by many California refugees (Diffner 58).

Notice how the quote is selective, taking only the necessary part of the original and making it part of the author's own sentence.

Direct quote, well integrated and with attribution: As UCLA sociologist Shannon Diffner notes, social forces such as "materialist greed" and personal experiences like "emotional isolation" often conspire to alienate Californians from their dreams (58).

Notice how the attribution is relevant to the quote: information that Diffner is a UCLA sociologist adds credibility to her analysis.