

Using Direct Quotations

General guidelines for Using Direct Quotations

- Use quotations sparingly and choose them wisely to accomplish purposes that would be difficult to achieve in other ways in your essay, such as:
 - Lending authority to your argument through an effective statement of an idea from a recognized leader in the field.
 - Explaining a concept in a particularly succinct and eloquent manner.
 - Making the author's style or choice of words a point of discussing in your essay – passages from a novel, for example.
- Quote no more than is necessary to achieve your purpose.
- Make sure that any quotation you use is relevant to the argument that you are putting forward and that the connection will be clear to your reader.
- Cite the source of a quoted passage in both the body of your essay and in your bibliography or reference list.
- Use the ellipsis mark (...) to show where you have deleted words in a quotation, and use square brackets ([]) to show where you have changed words (for clarity, brevity, or to make the quotation fit with your essay's sentence structure):

William James, for example, wrote, "Were one asked to characterize...religion in the broadest...terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves [to that order]."

- Be sure that the way you use the quotation in the essay is consistent with the original author's meaning.