

# USING QUOTATIONS

## Integrating Sources into Your Text

The evidence of others' information and opinions should back up, not dominate, your own ideas. To synthesize evidence, you need to smooth the transitions between your ideas and words and those of your sources, and you need to give the reader a context for interpreting the borrowed material.

NOTE: The examples in this section use the MLA style of sources documentation. The source citations not only acknowledge that materials are borrowed but also help to indicate where the borrowed material begins or ends.

## Introduction of Borrowed Material

Readers will be distracted from your point if borrowed material does not fit into your sentence. In the passage below, the writer has not meshed the structures of her own and her source's sentences:

**Awkward**                      One editor disagrees with this view and “a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts” (Lyman 52).

In the following revision the writer adds words to integrate the quotation into her sentence.

**Revised**                      One editor disagrees with this view, maintaining that “a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts: (Lyman 52).

To mesh your own and your source's words, you may sometimes need to make a substitution or addition to the quotation, signaling your change with brackets:

**Words Added**                      The tabloids [of England] are a journalistic case study in bad reporting,” claims Lyman (52).

**Verb Form Changed**                      A bad reporter, Lyman implies, is one who “[fails] to separate opinions from facts” (52). [The bracketed verb phrase replaces *fail* in the original.]

**Capitalization Changed**                      “[T]o separate opinions from facts” is the work of a good reporter (Lyman 52).

**Noun Supplied for Pronoun**                      The reliability of a news organization “depends on [reporters'] trustworthiness,” says Lyman (52). [The bracketed noun replaces *their* in the original.]

## Interpretation of Borrowed Material

Even when it does not conflict with your own sentence structure, borrowed material will be ineffective if you merely dump it in readers' laps without explaining how you intend it to be understood.

### Dumped

Many news editors and reporters maintain that it is impossible to keep personal opinions from influencing the selection and presentation of facts. "True, news reporters like everyone else, form impressions of what they see and hear. However, a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts" (Lyman 52). [We must figure out for ourselves that the writer's sentence and the quotation state opposite points of view.]

### Revised

Many news editors and reporters maintain that it is impossible to keep personal opinions from influencing the selection and presentation of facts. Yet not all authorities agree with this view. One editor grants that "news reporters, like everyone else, form impressions of what they see and hear." But he insists, "a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts" (Lyman 52). [The writer's additions tell us what to expect in the quotation.]

The words *grants* and *insists* in the revised passage tell the reader what to expect in the quotations following. Below are some other verbs that indicate the source author's attitude or approach to what he or she is saying. (Note that these verbs are in the present tense, the appropriate tense for discussions of others' writings.)

<b>Author is Neutral</b>	<b>Author Infers or Suggests</b>	<b>Author Argues</b>	<b>Author is Uneasy or Disparaging</b>	<b>Author Agrees</b>
comments	analyzes	claims	belittles	admits
describes	asks	contends	bemoans	agrees
explains	assesses	defends	complains	concedes
illustrates	concludes	disagrees	condemns	concur
notes	considers	holds	deplores	grants
observes	finds	insists	deprecates	
points out	predicts	maintains	derides	
records	proposes		laments	
relates	reveals		warns	
reports	shows			
says	speculates			
sees	suggests			
thinks	supposes			
writes				

Your interpretive words may precede the borrowed material, as above, or they may interrupt or follow it:

**Addition Interrupts**                      “However,” Lyman insist, “a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts” (52).

**Addition Follows**                      “[A] good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts,” Lyman insists (52).

You can add information to a quotation to integrate it into your text and inform readers why you are using it. If your readers will recognize it, you can provide the author’s name in the text:

**Author Named**                              Harold Lyman grants that “news reporters like everyone else, form impressions of what they see and hear.” But, Lyman insists, “a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts” (52).

If the source title contributes information about the author or the context of the quotation, you can provide it in the text:

**Title Given**                                      Harold Lyman, in his book *The Conscience of the Journalist*, grants that “news reporters, like everyone else, form impressions of what they see and hear.” But, Lyman insists, “a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts” (52).

Finally, if the quoted author’s background and experience reinforce or clarify the quotation, you can provide these credentials in the text:

**Credentials Given**                              Harold Lyman, a newspaper editor for more than forty years, grants that ““news reporters, like everyone else, form impressions of what they see and hear.” But, Lyman insists, “a good reporter does not fail to separate opinions from facts” (52).

You need not name the author, source, or credentials in your text when you are simply establishing facts or weaving together facts and opinions from varied sources. In the following passage, the information is more important than the source, so the name of the source is confined to a parenthetical acknowledgement.

To end the abuses of the British, many colonists were urging three actions: forming a united front, seceding from Britain, and taking control of their own international trade and diplomacy (Wills 325-36).

(The information on this handout was excerpted from The Little, Brown Compact Handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New York: Longman, 1998.)