

**Academic Resource Center
Wheeling Jesuit University**

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How Do I Cite or Use Quotes?

Your assignment is to write a paper in which you use textual support to prove your points. Some of the questions you might want to ask yourself are:

What's the Difference between Citing and Quoting?

- ✓ Every time you refer in your paper to the ideas you have found through your research, you need to Cite (using proper style, i.e., MLA, APA, CMS, etc.)
- ✓ Only when you borrow not only the idea but the actual words should you Quote (after which you will still need to cite your source appropriately).

How much support do I need to use?

- ✓ Make it a goal to use at least one quote from the text or paraphrased citation to support every "big" idea or major point you have included in your paper.
- ✓ An outline helps to isolate those major points and utilize quotes and citations appropriately.

Am I using enough support?

- ✓ Use textual evidence to explain how or why you formulated an idea.
- ✓ Think of quotes or textual support as your own personal fan club—a group of people who believe what you are saying and want to help you prove that you are right. Thus, when you make a point, have one of the members of your fan club back you up.

Am I using too much?

- ✓ It is important to remember that you never want quotes/textual support to outweigh your own analysis.
- ✓ Make sure you are including more of your own thoughts as opposed to those of someone else—you should talk more than your fan club.

- ✓ Their “thoughts” or words of wisdom should be used to support YOUR thoughts, not the other way around.

Should I be using my own words?

- ✓ Whenever possible, summarize in your own words the testimonials of your fan club members. To do so is also called **paraphrasing!**
- ✓ Paraphrasing is not simply changing a few words in a particular quote by using the thesaurus; rather, it is a thoughtful summary of that fan club member’s thoughts. (See the ARC handout on Plagiarism for more help with distinguishing true paraphrasing from “borrowing.”)

Think About it Another Way:

Consider your paper a “stand-in” for a long conversation with your professor in his/her office. You sit down across the desk in your professor’s office. You’re invited to tell everything you’ve learned while researching a topic. Will you...

- ✓ Pick up one text after another and read aloud from them?
- ✓ Put most things in your own words (admittedly less polished than the texts), thereby letting your professor know that you have understood and made sense of what you’ve read?

Some Suggestions...

- ✓ Be careful not to fall into the trap of “hanging quotes.” A hanging quote is a quote that stands all by itself in a sentence, without any of your own words to introduce it or comment on it.
 - *Hanging Quote:*
“There are many theories of poetic origins” (Bloom 59).
 - *Introduced Quote:*
Despite the argument that all poetry proceeds from direct experience, Bloom argues that “[t]here are many theories of poetic origins” (59).
- ✓ Try to end paragraphs or conclude major ideas/points of our paper with your own words, not someone else’s.
- ✓ Do not use “back-to-back quotes,” one after another, without interjection of your own thoughts. There is a reason that you utilize a specific quote, right? Make sure you explain that reason rather than expecting the quote to do so on its own.
- ✓ **Remember, quotes are your support, but not your crutch!**