

of learning about it; as you write, your understanding of your subject will almost certainly deepen. As writer E. M. Forster once put it, “How can I know what I think until I see what I say?”

Early in the reading and writing process, you can keep your mind open—yet focused—by posing questions. The thesis that you articulate later in the process will be an answer to the central question you pose, as in the following examples.

#### PUBLIC POLICY QUESTION

Should states regulate use of cell phones in moving vehicles?

#### POSSIBLE THESIS

States must regulate use of cell phones on the road because drivers using phones are seriously impaired and because laws on negligent and reckless driving are not sufficient to punish offenders.

#### LITERATURE QUESTION

What does Stephen Crane’s short story “The Open Boat” reveal about the relationship between humans and nature?

#### POSSIBLE THESIS

In Stephen Crane’s gripping tale “The Open Boat,” four men lost at sea discover not only that nature is indifferent to their fate but that their own particular talents make little difference as they struggle for survival.

Notice that both thesis statements take a stand on a debatable issue—an issue about which intelligent, well-meaning people might disagree. Each writer’s job will be to convince such people that his or her view is worth taking seriously.

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## 28b Organizing your evidence

The body of your paper will consist of evidence in support of your thesis. Early in the writing process, keep

your organizational plan simple. Instead of constructing a formal outline, list your key lines of argument, as the student who wrote the first thesis on page 114 has done.

- Drivers distracted by cellular phones are seriously impaired.
- Current laws on negligent and reckless driving are not adequate.
- In the United States, major traffic laws must be passed on the state level.

Once you have drafted your paper, you may want to turn your list into a formal outline that reflects not only your key lines of argument but also the complexities of your evidence.

## 29 Avoiding plagiarism

Your research paper is a collaboration between you and your sources. To be fair and ethical, you must acknowledge your debt to the writers of those sources. If you don’t, you are guilty of plagiarism, a serious academic offense.

Three different acts are considered plagiarism: (1) failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas, (2) failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and (3) failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words.

### 29a Citing quotations and borrowed ideas

You must of course cite all direct quotations or other material taken directly from a source (for example, charts or cartoons). You must also cite any ideas borrowed from a source: an author’s original insights, any information summarized or paraphrased from the text, and statistics and other specific facts.

The only exception is common knowledge—general information that your readers may know or could easily locate. For example, it is well known that Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1993 and that Emily Dickinson published only a handful of poems during her life. As a rule, when you have seen certain information repeatedly in your reading, you don’t need to cite it. However, when information has appeared in only a few sources, when it is highly specific (as with statistics), or when it is controversial, you should cite it.

The Modern Language Association recommends a system of in-text citations. Here, briefly, is how the MLA citation system usually works:

1. The source is introduced by a signal phrase that names its author.
2. The material being cited is followed by a page number in parentheses.
3. At the end of the paper, a list of works cited (arranged alphabetically according to authors' last names) gives complete publication information about the source.

#### IN-TEXT CITATION

According to Donald Redelmeier and Robert Tibshirani, "The use of cellular telephones in motor vehicles is associated with a quadrupling of the risk of a collision during the brief period of a call" (453).

#### ENTRY IN THE LIST OF WORKS CITED

Redelmeier, Donald A., and Robert J. Tibshirani. "Association between Cellular-Telephone Calls and Motor Vehicle Collisions." *New England Journal of Medicine* 336 (1997): 453-58.

Handling an MLA citation is not always this simple. For a detailed discussion of possible variations, see 32.

### 29b Enclosing borrowed language in quotation marks

To show readers that you are using a source's exact phrases or sentences, enclose them in quotation marks unless they have been set off from the text (see p. 122). To omit the quotation marks is to claim—falsely—that the language is your own. Such an omission is plagiarism even if you have cited the source.

#### ORIGINAL SOURCE

Future cars will provide drivers with concierge services, web-based information, online e-mail capabilities, CD-ROM access, on-screen and audio navigation technology, and a variety of other information and entertainment services.

—Matt Sundeen, "Cell Phones and Highway Safety: 2000 State Legislative Update," p. 1

#### PLAGIARISM

Matt Sundeen points out that in cars of the future drivers will have concierge services, web-based information, online e-mail capabilities,

CD-ROM access, on-screen and audio navigation technology, and a variety of other information and entertainment services (1).

#### BORROWED LANGUAGE IN QUOTATION MARKS

Matt Sundeen points out that in cars of the future drivers will have "concierge services, web-based information, online e-mail capabilities, CD-ROM access, on-screen and audio navigation technology, and a variety of other information and entertainment services" (1).

### 29c Putting summaries and paraphrases in your own words

A summary condenses information from a source; a paraphrase conveys this information in about the same number of words. When you summarize or paraphrase, it is not enough to name the source; you must restate the source's meaning using your own language. You are guilty of plagiarism if you half-copy the author's sentences—either by mixing the author's phrases with your own without using quotation marks or by plugging your synonyms into the author's sentence structure.

The first paraphrase of the following source is plagiarized—even though the source is cited—because too much of its language is borrowed from the original. The underlined strings of words have been copied word-for-word (without quotation marks). In addition, the writer has closely echoed the sentence structure of the source, merely plugging in some synonyms (*demonstrated* for *shown*, *devising* for *designing*, and *car* for *automotive*).

#### ORIGINAL SOURCE

The automotive industry has not shown good judgment in designing automotive features that distract drivers. A classic example is the use of a touch-sensitive screen to replace all the controls for radios, tape/CD players, and heating/cooling. Although an interesting technology, such devices require that the driver take his eyes off the road.

—Tom Magliozzi and Ray Magliozzi,  
Letter to a Massachusetts state senator, p. 3

#### PLAGIARISM: UNACCEPTABLE BORROWING

Radio show hosts Tom and Ray Magliozzi argue that the automotive industry has not demonstrated good judgment in devising car features that distract drivers. One feature is a touch-sensitive screen that

replaces controls for radios, tape/CD players, and heating/cooling. Although the technology is interesting, such devices require that a driver look away from the road (3).

To avoid plagiarizing an author's language, resist the temptation to look at the source while you are summarizing or paraphrasing—or to download the source and try to change the author's wording. Instead, put the source aside, write from memory or rough notes, and check later for accuracy.

#### ACCEPTABLE PARAPHRASE

Radio show hosts Tom and Ray Magliozzi claim that motor vehicle manufacturers do not always design features with safety in mind. For example, when designers replaced radio, CD player, and temperature control knobs with touch-sensitive panels, they were forgetting one thing: To use the panels, drivers would need to take their eyes off the road (3).

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## 30 Integrating nonfiction sources

By carefully integrating quotations and other source material into your own text, you help readers understand whose views you are hearing—yours or those of your sources. In addition, you show readers where cited material begins and where it ends.

**NOTE:** When using the Modern Language Association's in-text citations, use present tense or present perfect tense verbs in phrases that introduce quotations or other

source material from nonfiction sources: *Perry points out that* or *Perry has pointed out that* (not *Perry pointed out that*). If you have good reason to emphasize that the author's language or opinion was articulated in the past, however, the past tense is acceptable.

The first time you mention an author, use the full name: *Matt Sundeen reports that*. . . . when you refer to the author again, you may use the last name only: *Sundeen summarizes the statistics*.

### 30a Integrating quotations

Readers need to move from your own words to the words of a source without feeling a jolt.

**Using signal phrases.** Avoid dropping quotations into the text without warning. Instead, provide clear signal phrases, usually including the author's name, to prepare readers for a quotation.

#### DROPPED QUOTATION

In 2000, the legislature of Suffolk County passed a law restricting drivers' use of handheld phones. "The bill prohibits the use of a cell phone while driving unless it is equipped with an earpiece or can act like a speakerphone, leaving the driver's hands free" (Kelley 1).

#### QUOTATION WITH SIGNAL PHRASE

In 2000, the legislature of Suffolk County passed a law restricting drivers' use of handheld phones. According to journalist Tina Kelley, "The bill prohibits the use of a cell phone while driving unless it is equipped with an earpiece or can act like a speakerphone, leaving the driver's hands free" (1).

To avoid monotony, try to vary both the language and the placement of your signal phrases.

In the words of researchers Redelmeier and Tibshirani, ". . . ."

As Matt Sundeen has noted, ". . . ."

Patti Pena, mother of a child killed by a driver distracted by a cell phone, points out that ". . . ."

". . . .," writes Christine Haughney, ". . . ."

". . . .," claims wireless industry spokesperson Annette Jacobs.

Radio hosts Tom and Ray Magliozzi offer a persuasive counterargument: ". . . ."

When your signal phrase includes a verb, choose one that is appropriate in the context. Is your source arguing a point, making an observation, reporting a fact, drawing a conclusion, refuting an argument, or stating a belief? By choosing an appropriate verb, such as one on the following list, you can make your source's stance clear.

acknowledges	comments	endorses	reasons
adds	compares	grants	refutes
admits	confirms	illustrates	rejects
agrees	contends	implies	reports
argues	declares	insists	responds
asserts	denies	notes	suggests
believes	disputes	observes	thinks
claims	emphasizes	points out	writes

**Limiting your use of quotations.** Except for the following legitimate uses of quotations, use your own words to summarize and paraphrase your sources and to explain your own ideas.

#### WHEN TO USE QUOTATIONS

- When language is especially vivid or expressive
- When exact wording is needed for technical accuracy
- When it is important to let the debaters of an issue explain their positions in their own words
- When the words of an important authority lend weight to an argument
- When the language of a source is the topic of your discussion (as in an analysis or interpretation)

It is not always necessary to quote full sentences from a source. To reduce your reliance on the words of others, you can often integrate a phrase from a source into your own sentence structure.

Redelmeier and Tibshirani found that hands-free phones were not any safer in vehicles than other cell phones. They suggest that crashes involving cell phones may “result from a driver’s limitations with regard to attention rather than dexterity” (456).

**Using the ellipsis mark.** To condense a quoted passage, you can use the ellipsis mark (three spaced periods) to

indicate that you have omitted words. What remains must be grammatically complete.

The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center has begun a study assessing a variety of driver distractions. According to Allyson Vaughan, “The research . . . is intended to inject some empirical evidence into the debate over whether talking on wireless phones while driving leads to accidents” (1).

The writer has omitted the words *funded by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety*, which appeared in the source.

On the rare occasions when you want to omit a full sentence or more, use a period before the three ellipsis dots.

Redelmeier and Tibshirani acknowledge that their study “indicates an association but not necessarily a causal relation between the use of cellular telephones while driving and a subsequent motor vehicle collision. . . . In addition, our study did not include serious injuries . . .” (457).

Ordinarily, do not use an ellipsis mark at the beginning or at the end of a quotation. Your readers will understand that the quoted material is taken from a longer passage, so such marks are not necessary. The only exception occurs when words at the end of the final quoted sentence have been dropped. In such cases, put three ellipsis dots before the closing quotation mark and parenthetical reference, as in the previous example.

Obviously you should not use an ellipsis mark to distort the meaning of your source.

**Using brackets.** Brackets (square parentheses) allow you to insert words of your own into quoted material. You can insert words in brackets to clarify matters or to keep a sentence grammatical in your context.

According to economists Robert Hahn and Paul Tetlock, “Some studies say they [hands-free phones] would have no impact on accidents, while others suggest the reductions could be sizable” (2).

To indicate an error in a quotation, insert [sic] right after the error or (sic) after the closing quotation mark.

**Setting off long quotations.** When you quote more than four typed lines of prose, set off the quotation by indenting it one inch (or ten spaces) from the left margin.

Long quotations should be introduced by an informative sentence, usually followed by a colon. Quotation marks are unnecessary because the indented format tells readers that the words are taken directly from the source.

Tom and Ray Magliozzi are not impressed by economists who conduct risk-benefit analyses of phone use by drivers:

Other critics [of regulation of cell phones]--some from prestigious "think tanks"--perform what appear to be erudite cost/benefit analyses. The problem here is that the benefits are always in units of convenience and productivity while the costs are in units of injuries and people's lives! (2)

At the end of an indented quotation the parenthetical citation goes outside the final punctuation mark.

### 30b Integrating summaries and paraphrases

Summaries and paraphrases are written in your own words. As with quotations, you should introduce most summaries and paraphrases with a signal phrase that names the author and places the material in context. Readers will then understand that everything between the signal phrase and the parenthetical citation summarizes or paraphrases the cited source.

Without the signal phrase (underlined> in the following example, readers might think that only the quotation at the end is being cited, when in fact the whole paragraph is based on the source.

Alasdair Cain and Mark Burris report that research on traffic accidents and cell phone use has been inconclusive. Many factors play a role: for example, the type of phone (hands-free or not), the extent to which the conversation is distracting, and the demographic profile of the driver. Although research suggests that phoning in a moving vehicle affects driver performance, studies have failed to quantify the degree of driver impairment. Cain and Burris write that drivers using cell phones on the road "were anywhere from 34 percent to 300 percent more likely to have an accident" (1).

When the context makes clear where the cited material begins, however, you may omit the signal phrase and name the author in the parentheses.

### 30c Integrating statistics and other facts

When you are citing a statistic or other specific fact, a signal phrase is often not necessary. In most cases, readers will understand that the citation refers to the statistic or fact (not the whole paragraph).

As of 2000, there were about ninety million cell phone users in the United States, with 85% of them using their phones while on the road (Sundeen 1).

There is nothing wrong, however, with using a signal phrase to introduce a statistic or other fact.

Matt Sundeen reports that as of 2000, there were about ninety million cell phone users in the United States, with 85% of them using their phones while on the road (1).

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## 31 Integrating literary quotations

Integrating quotations from a literary work smoothly into your own text can present a challenge. Because of the complexities of literature, do not be surprised to find yourself puzzling over the most graceful way to tuck in a short phrase or the clearest way to introduce a more extended passage from the work.

**NOTE:** The parenthetical citations at the ends of examples in this section tell readers where the quoted words can be found. They indicate the lines of a poem; the act, scene, and lines of a play; or the page number of a quotation from a short story or novel. (For guidelines on citing literary works, see pp. 133–34.)

### 31a Introducing literary quotations

When writing about nonfiction essays and books, you have probably learned to introduce a quotation with a signal phrase naming the author: *According to Jane Doe, Jane Doe points out that*, and so on.

When introducing quotations from a literary work, however, make sure that you don't confuse the work's author with the narrator of a story, the speaker of a poem, or a character in a play. Instead of naming the author, you can refer to the narrator or speaker—or to the work itself.

#### INAPPROPRIATE

Poet Andrew Marvell describes his fear of death like this: "But at my back I always hear/Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near" (21-22).

#### APPROPRIATE

Addressing his beloved in an attempt to win her sexual favors, the speaker of the poem argues that death gives them no time to waste: "But at my back I always hear/Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near" (21-22).

#### APPROPRIATE

The poem "To His Coy Mistress" says as much about fleeting time and death as it does about sexual passion. Its most powerful lines may well be "But at my back I always hear/Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near" (21-22).

In the last example, you could of course mention the author as well: *Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress" says as much. . . .* Although the author is mentioned, he is not being confused with the speaker of the poem.

If you are quoting the words of a character in a story or a play, you should name the character who is speaking and provide a context for the spoken words. In the following example, the quoted dialogue is from Tennessee Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie*.

Laura's life is so completely ruled by Amanda that when urged to make a wish on the moon, she asks, "What shall I wish for, Mother?" (1.5.140).

For examples of quoted dialogue from a short story, see page 153.

### 31b Avoiding shifts in tense

Because it is conventional to write about literature in the present tense (see p. 35) and because literary works often use other tenses, you will need to exercise some care when weaving quotations into your own text. A first-draft attempt may result in an awkward shift, as it did for one student who was writing about Nadine Gordimer's short story "Friday's Footprint."

#### TENSE SHIFT

When Rita sees Johnny's relaxed attitude, "she blushed, like a wave of illness" (159).

To avoid the distracting shift from present to past tense, the writer decided to include the reference to Rita's blushing in her own text and reduce the length of the quotation.

#### REVISED

When Rita sees Johnny's relaxed attitude, she blushes, "like a wave of illness" (159).

The writer could have changed the quotation to present tense, using brackets to indicate the change, like this: *When Rita sees Johnny's relaxed attitude, "she blushe[s], like a wave of illness" (159).* (See also p. 121.)

### 31c Formatting literary quotations

Guidelines for formatting quotations from short stories or novels, poems, and plays are slightly different from one another.

**Short stories or novels.** If a quotation from a short story or a novel takes up four or fewer typed lines, put it in quotation marks and run it into the text of your essay. Include a page number in parentheses after the quotation.

The narrator of Eudora Welty's "Why I Live at the P.O.," known to us only as "Sister," makes many catty remarks about her enemies. For example, she calls Mr. Whitaker "this photographer with the pop-eyes" (46).

If a quotation from a short story or a novel is five typed lines or longer, set it off from the text by indenting one inch (or ten spaces) from the left margin; when you set a quotation off from the text, do not use quotation marks. (See also p. 122.) Put the page number in parentheses after the final mark of punctuation.

Sister's tale begins with "I," and she makes every event revolve around herself, even her sister's marriage:

I was getting along fine with Mama, Papa-Daddy, and Uncle Rondo until my sister Stella-Rondo just separated from her husband and came back home again. Mr. Whitaker! Of course I went with Mr. Whitaker first, when he first appeared here in China Grove, taking "Pose Yourself" photos, and Stella-Rondo broke us up. (46)

**Poems.** Enclose quotations of three or fewer lines of poetry in quotation marks within your text, and indicate line breaks with a slash. Include line numbers in parentheses at the end of the quotation. For the first reference, use the word "lines." Thereafter, use just numbers.

The opening of Frost's "Fire and Ice" strikes a conversational tone: "Some say the world will end in fire, / Some say in ice" (lines 1-2).

When you quote four or more lines of poetry, set the quotation off from the text by indenting one inch (or ten spaces) and omit the quotation marks. Put the line numbers in parentheses after the final mark of punctuation.

Like the rest of the poem, the final stanza of Louise Bogan's "Women" presents a negative stereotype of women, suggesting that women tend to be too timid and housebound to embrace life fully:

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them  
A shout and a cry.  
As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills  
They should let it go by. (17-20)

**NOTE:** You may reduce the one-inch indent to make the lines fit.

**Plays.** If a quotation from a character in a play takes up four or fewer typed lines, put quotation marks around it and run it into the text of your essay. Whenever possible, include the act, scene, and line numbers in

parentheses at the end of the quotation. Separate the numbers with periods, and use arabic numerals unless your instructor prefers roman numerals.

Two attendants silently watch as the sleepwalking Lady Macbeth subconsciously struggles with her guilt: "Here's the smell of blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (5.1.50-51).

## 32 MLA documentation style

To document sources, the Modern Language Association (MLA) recommends in-text citations that refer readers to a list of works cited.

### DIRECTORY TO MLA IN-TEXT CITATION MODELS

#### BASIC RULES FOR PRINT AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES

- |                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Author named in a signal phrase | 128 |
| 2. Author named in parentheses     | 129 |
| 3. Author unknown                  | 129 |
| 4. Page number unknown             | 129 |
| 5. One-page source                 | 130 |

#### VARIATIONS ON THE BASIC RULES

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 6. Two or more titles by the same author              | 130 |
| 7. Two or three authors                               | 131 |
| 8. Four or more authors                               | 131 |
| 9. Corporate author                                   | 131 |
| 10. Authors with the same last name                   | 132 |
| 11. Indirect source (source quoted in another source) | 132 |
| 12. Encyclopedia or dictionary                        | 132 |
| 13. Multivolume work                                  | 132 |
| 14. Two or more works                                 | 132 |
| 15. An entire work                                    | 133 |
| 16. Work in an anthology                              | 133 |

#### LITERARY WORKS AND SACRED TEXTS

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 17. Legal source                                 | 133 |
| 18. Literary works without parts or line numbers | 134 |
| 19. Verse plays and poems                        | 134 |
| 20. Novels with numbered divisions               | 134 |
| 21. Sacred texts                                 | 134 |