When integrating outside sources, the goal is to work the sources into your writing, not to insert your writing into the sources. The whole point of using outside sources is to provide evidence and support for the main thrust of the paper (your own ideas and/or purpose).

--- When to use a direct quotation:

Remember that it is usually best to favor summaries and paraphrases over direct quotations. Only use quotations when the author uses particularly vivid language, you are analyzing primary sources (such as literary works or historical documents), or a paraphrase simply will not suffice.

NOTE: Even if you are paraphrasing or summarizing, you must always cite your source.

Examples of when a direct quotation would be appropriate:

“He repeated until his dying day that there was no one with more common sense, no stonecutter more obstinate, no manager more lucid or dangerous, than a poet” (Marquez, 1985, p. 168).


“The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract” (Lincoln, 1865).


--- How to use a direct quotation:

Merely dropping the information between your sentences will be ineffective. You must introduce and/or interpret the outside source that you are utilizing. In other words, give meaning to the quotation by showing how it applies to your ideas.

Examples:

--- Incorrect: In observing my niece, I noted how her eyes seemed to follow people walking in the room. “In intermodal perception, we make sense of these running streams of light, sound, tactile, odor, and taste information by perceiving objects and events as unified wholes” (Berk, 2007, p.146). It was incredible to see how quickly she had developed from even the previous month.

--- Correct: In observing my niece, I noted how her eyes seemed to follow people walking in the room. It is clear that she is engaging in intermodal perception, the point at which “we make sense of these running streams of light, sound, tactile, odor, and taste information by perceiving objects and events as unified wholes” (Berk, 2007, p. 146).


--- Incorrect: Twain’s style of writing portrayed that of imagery and symbolism. “In the midst of the prayer a fly had lit on the back of the pew in front of him and tortured his spirit by calmly rubbing its hands together, embracing its head with its arms, and polishing it so vigorously that it seemed to almost part company with the body” (Twain, 1876, p. 62).

--- Correct: Twain’s style of writing portrayed that of imagery and symbolism. In describing a young boy’s struggle to concentrate, Twain (1876) stated, “In the midst of the prayer a fly had lit on the back of the pew in front of him and tortured his spirit by calmly rubbing its hands together, embracing its head with its arms, and polishing it so vigorously that it seemed to almost part company with the body” (p. 62).


NOTE: All of the citations on this page are in APA format. For MLA style, please consult your MLA Handbook.