

# Using Sources

Some Guidelines and Tips

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5. Interpret quotes.
6. Quote accurately.
7. Cite sources.



1. Let ***your*** voice carry the essay.

- **Guide the reader** through your sources.

Don't just throw a bunch of quotes at her.

- **Connect the dots** for the reader between all your research.

Show how your sources connect, compare, and contrast.

- **Emphasize** for the reader how each source supports your argument.

Refer back to your thesis as you discuss your sources.

To help maximize your own voice....

2. Summarize and/or paraphrase sources.

What is the distinction between the two?

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Reword a source w/ about the **same emphasis, order, and word count.**

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Let's look at these two tools using a sample source....

“If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.”

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- Here is this passage **Paraphrased:**

“If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.”  
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- Here is this passage **Paraphrased**:

King argues that African-Americans and other oppressed peoples should not resort to taking up arms against their oppressors, because to do so would lead posterity into turmoil and confusion. Brutality, he states, is not the right strategy (414).

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This puts the passage in my own words, but maintains about the same number of words and sequence of points as King's wording.

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- Now, here it is **Summarized:**

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King argues that brutality on the part of oppressed African-Americans would lead posterity into turmoil and confusion (414).

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- Now, here it is **Summarized:**

King argues that brutality on the part of oppressed African-Americans would lead posterity into turmoil and confusion (414).

This gets across, in my own words, just the gist of the original passage.

Another way to help you maximize your own voice in your essay is to....

### 3. Quote selectively.

For direct quotes, choose language that is particularly:

- **Memorable**

It would lose something if you reworded it.

- **Concise**

It is short, sweet, and exactly to the point you're making.

- **Authoritative**

It is particularly convincing.



When you **do** want to quote directly,  
be sure to....

## 4. Introduce quotes.

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~~King argues that the oppressed  
should not physically fight their oppressors.  
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The introduction isn't connected to the quote,  
and so it doesn't give a good signal that the quote  
is coming. Instead, you should....

## 4. Introduce quotes.

- Use a *signal phrase*.

For example:

According to filmmaker and activist Michael Moore, “...

As Al Gore has argued, “...

Mike Davis, a California scholar, points out that “...

King offers an impassioned stance: “...

Each of these phrases **signals to the reader** that a quote is coming and **provides some information about the quote.**

**To keep things interesting and easy to read**  
when using signal phrases,  
you should also make a point to....

# 1. Vary signal phrase **position**.

King concludes, “Violence is not the way” (414).

Signal phrase precedes the quote.

“Violence is not the way,” King concludes (414).

Signal phrase follows the quote.

“Violence,” King concludes, “is not the way” (414).

Signal phrase breaks up the quote.

**Mixing up your use of signal phrases keeps your prose interesting.**

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**Neutral?** Use: Comments, describes, explains, illustrates, notes, observes, points out, records, relates, reports, says, sees, writes....

**Suggesting?** Use: Analyzes, asks, assesses, concludes, considers, finds, predicts, proposes, reveals, shows, speculates, suggests, supposes....

**Arguing?** Use: Claims, contends, defends, holds, insists, maintains....

**Agreeing?** Use: Admits, agrees, concedes, acknowledges, grants....

**Aggressively Upset?** Use: Belittles, bemoans, complains, condemns, deplores, deprecates, derides, disagrees, laments, scorns, warns....

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**Choosing signal phrases with care** can enrich our understanding of your **sources**. **And finally....**

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~~King argues, "If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom" (414).~~

***What if*** they succumb? It doesn't complete a thought.

It doesn't "flow."

It doesn't make syntactical sense as a sentence.



And what's wrong with this?

King is against “victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence...” (414).

Read it as one sentence, regardless of quotes:

*King is against victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence?*

It doesn't make syntactical sense, either.

**Be sure the language from your signal phrase to the quote is smooth and correct.**

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King is against “victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence...” (414).

Read it as one sentence, regardless of quotes:

~~King is against victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence.~~

It doesn't make syntactical sense, either.

**Be sure the language from your signal phrase to the quote is smooth and correct.**

Finally, maintain your voice in your essay by  
**explaining to your reader  
why you've quoted what you've quoted.**  
That is, be sure that you...

## 5. Interpret quotes.

“If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.”  
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Provide **summary** around quotes:

- King cautions that if African-Americans and other oppressed peoples resort to taking up arms against their oppressors, their “chief legacy” to posterity would be “an endless reign of meaningless chaos” (414).

“If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.”  
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**Compare or contrast** to other sources or ideas:

- King expresses a philosophy much like Gandhi’s when he argues that “[v]iolence is not the way” (414).
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## 6. Quote accurately.

- Be exact, including caps and punctuation.
- Use brackets to make quotes fit.

“If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.”  
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Use brackets to make letters and words fit your syntax:

- **King argues that “[v]iolence is not the way” (414).**  
In the original, that V is a capital. The brackets show the reader that.
- **King argues that if the American Negro “succumb[s] to the temptation of using violence,” the result would be turmoil and confusion (414).**  
In the original, King uses a plural subject for “succumb,” but in the signal phrase, the writer changes it to a singular one – so the verb form has to change, too.

“If the American Negro and other victims of oppression succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle for freedom, future generations will be the recipients of a desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos. Violence is not the way.”  
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You can also use brackets to supply nouns for pronouns.

- **King argues that by using aggression, “our chief legacy to [future generations] will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos” (414).**

The original reads “our chief legacy to them,” but in this example, the reader might not know who “them” refers to. Plugging the original phrase into the brackets can help.

## 7. Cite sources

For which of paraphrasing, summarizing and quoting do we need to cite sources?

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**For ALL THREE.**

Anything that does not come out of your own brain or from “common knowledge” needs to be cited.

# In MLA citation style

The basic citation template requires **author** and **page number**.

Here, **author** is introduced with a signal phrase, and the **page number** is in parentheses:

Rob Jones reports that lenders have “used fantastically unscrupulous methods for decades” (147).

# In MLA citation style

In this example, both **author** and **page number** are in parentheses:

Small-time traders have often taken the fall for the corporate elite (Jones 143).

## In MLA citation style

Sometimes, a page number may not be available (as with an online source). In that case, use just the author:

The changes to the law have “ghastly implications for civil rights” (Robbins).



## In MLA citation style

Likewise, a single author might not be available. In that case, use the article name, in quotation marks:

Polls indicate a lack of support for the law (“Changes to Drug Law”).

# Further resources

Numerous resources for the MLA system are available online, including at Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL):

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

This is OWL's page on Research and Citation:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/9/>

# Further resources

And for one-on-one writing help, contact

Megan Grumbling, at [mgrumbling@une.edu](mailto:mgrumbling@une.edu)

or

John Daugherty, at [jdaugherty@une.edu](mailto:jdaugherty@une.edu)

in UNE's Learning Assistance Center.

# Remember:

- Accurate use of sources is an academic necessity.
- *Graceful* use of sources is an art.
- All accuracy and grace with sources is in support of *your voice*. Let us hear it.