

INTEGRATING A QUOTATION INTO AN ESSAY

Once you find a quotation that you think can add to your argument, you must begin to think about how to best fit the quotation within the essay. Think of a quotation as a miniscule essay in itself—it provides an argument and needs an introduction and conclusion to give it clarity. The following general steps address how to properly integrate a quotation into an essay.

Step 1: Introduce the Author of the Quotation

Because you are using someone else's words, make sure you let your reader know this. The first time you use a quotation from a source in an essay, introduce the author and the work that the quotation is attributed to before you use the actual quotation in the essay. Later in the essay, you simply need to address the author's last name before using the quotation.

Try not to get stuck saying “he says/she says” throughout the whole essay. Use a variety of verbs including: state, declare, believe, contend, recall, write, note, critique, propose, etc.

Example (for a first-time quotation): Karl Marx, writer of the pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto*, proclaims, “Communism abolishes all eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis” (81).

Example (for a later quotation): Marx also contends, “Communism abolishes all eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis” (81).

Step 2: State the Quotation

The quotation should add to your argument and flow logically and grammatically with the rest of the paper. To ensure this, make sure that you use a quotation of the proper length. A quotation that is too short or too long will disrupt the flow of the essay. When choosing a quotation, keep in mind that you want it to contribute to your argument, not veer your paper in a different direction.

If you want to quote some parts of a longer sentence, use an ellipsis (...) between each part. Only use a quotation that is more than three sentences if you think that it would be impossible to eliminate a part of it and still retain the quality of your argument. When you quote a long passage (also known as a block quotation), begin the quotation on the next line of text, indent the entire quotation, and do not use quotations marks around it.

Also, remember to properly cite the quotation at the end of the sentence!

Example: He proclaims, “Communism abolishes all eternal truths...instead of constituting them on a new basis” (Marx 81).

How long is a “long quotation”?

Whether to use a block quotation depends on which formatting style you're following.

MLA: A quotation longer than 4 lines of prose or 3 lines of poetry.

APA: A quotation 40 words or longer

Chicago: A quotation 100 words or longer.

Step 3: Summarize the Quotation

This step may not be necessary if the quotation is relatively easy to understand. Use your own judgment regarding this step. It is important, though,

for the reader to understand the quotation and know that you have a similar understanding. To do the summary, rephrase the quotation in your own words. You can begin this sentence by using a phrase such as “In other words...” or “This refers to...”

Example: In other words, communism throws out all beliefs, not only ones that counter communism.

Step 4: Analyze the Quotation

Analyzing a quotation is much different from summarizing a quotation. The goal of summarizing is to simply retell the quotation in different words. Analysis, on the other hand, requires you to break down the quotation and examine its parts carefully in order to reach its meaning.

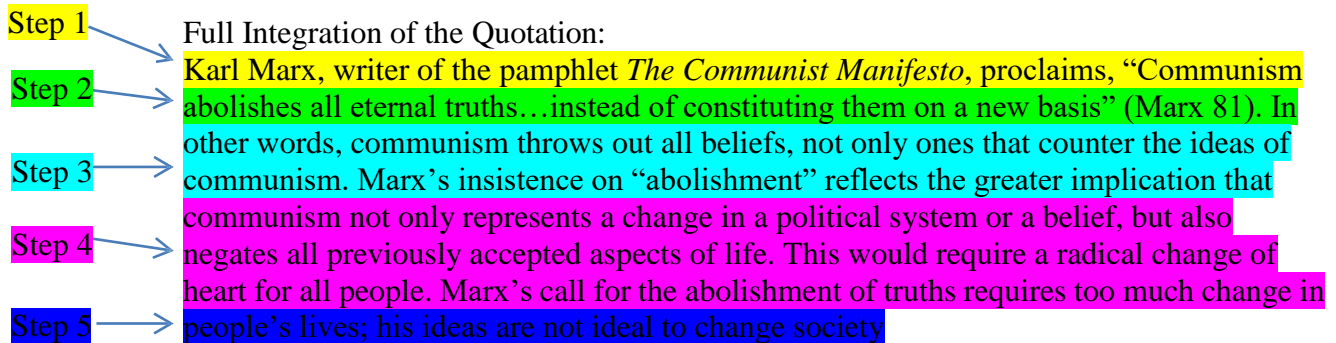
To do this, identify key words or phrases that help to explain the significance of the quotation. Use these key words to help uncover its meaning and implications. You can italicize or quote these words into your analytical sentence. Use this step to think about the implications of the ideas in the quotation and provide your own commentary on its meaning.

Example: Marx’s insistence on “abolishment” reflects the greater implication that communism not only represents a change in a political system or belief, but also negates all previously accepted aspects of life. This would require a radical change of heart for all people.

Step 5: State the Quotation’s Relevance to Your Argument

This step is the most important; it ties your quotation back into the rest of your paper. This can be done in a variety of ways, but all include drawing a parallel between the quotation and your argument. Stating the quotation’s relevance completes the argument and shows the reader that you have completed your thought. You should never end a paragraph with a quotation without explaining its significance to your argument.

Example: Marx’s call for the abolishment of all truths requires too much change in people’s lives; his ideas are not ideal to change society.



Thank You!