

# Introducing Quotations

Quotations and paraphrases should almost always be introduced by a phrase or even a whole sentence. This "signal phrase," as one grammarian calls it, often names the author and serves to blend what is quoted or paraphrased into your own argument, the flow and development of your own ideas. Virtually never should a quotation appear as a separate sentence in your paper, unaccompanied by some introductory, or sometimes trailing phrase. (The exception is when the quotation is used as an epigraph, which by definition appears out of nowhere at the start of an essay or section of an essay.) Punctuate these introductory phrases or sentences as follows:

## **If using a phrase to introduce, punctuate with a comma:**

The abolitionists have it all wrong. As the esteemed George Fitzhugh says, "The negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and in some sense, the freest people in the world" (Fitzhugh 1).

Frederick Douglass is clearly driven by his hatred for Christianity. As he says in the Appendix to his *Narrative*, "I . . . hate the . . . Christianity of this land" (Douglass 150). What else does a Christian need need to know to dismiss this fanatic?

## **If using a whole sentence as an introduction, end it with a colon:**

Douglass is unequivocal about his father's race: "My father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I ever heard speak of my parentage" (Douglass 2).

## **Finally, it is possible just to blend your sentence right into the quotation with no punctuation:**

The Bible is quite clear in its endorsement of slavery. The apostle Paul instructs slaves to "obey [their] masters" (Colossians 3:12), just as he counsels wives to "submit to [their] husbands" (Colossians 3:18).

Fitzhugh explains that slavery in the American South, unlike the slavery of the West Indies, has become "a benign and protective institution" (Fitzhugh 2).

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## **Verbs to use in introducing quotations\*: (This list is not exhaustive, but is a good start.)**

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

\*This list comes from Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference* 4th ed. © 1999 Bedford/St.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

## **Make your own!**

**It is now time to practice this lesson by constructing your own properly introduced and integrated quotations.**

Please feel free to concoct your quotations, citations, and surrounding text from thin and/or hot air. You may wish to steal shamelessly from a book in your vicinity, or to work with the person next to you and cite an "interview." (MLA citation format is to be found on pages 17-19 of your planner.) The point is not the accuracy of your content, but your skill in weaving quotations into your writing, and your demonstration of correct MLA citation and Works Cited format.

**Use a phrase to introduce a quotation, and punctuate with a comma. (One example, with citation.)**

**Use a whole sentence as an introduction, and end it with a colon. (One example, with citation.)**

**Blend your sentence right into the quotation with no punctuation. (One example, with citation.)**

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**Supply the Works Cited entry for one of your examples:**

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**Consult "Verbs to use in introducing quotations" from the handout in writing your examples. Use the other side of this sheet if necessary.**