

ABOUT USING DIRECT QUOTATIONS and PARENTHETICAL DOCUMENTATION

What is a “direct quotation”?

It may be the exact words of a speaker in a novel and already in quotation marks, or it may be the words of the narrator, which might not be in quotation marks (in which case you will need to put quotation marks around it).

NOTE: YOU MUST COPY DOWN THE DIRECT QUOTATION **EXACTLY**
AS YOU FOUND IT IN ITS ORIGINAL SOURCE.

ALSO, A DIRECT QUOTATION **MUST NEVER STAND ALONE** AS A SENTENCE IN YOUR PAPER! MUST CREATE A "LEAD-IN" OR ADD WORDS AFTER THE DQ SO THAT IT ABSOLUTELY DOES NOT STAND ALONE!!!!!!

What is “parenthetical documentation”?

You must use correct format for **parenthetical documentation** to show where you found a direct quotation (or any paraphrased material) you have “borrowed” from a source. This means that right after the quotation (or paraphrased material), you must write the author of the “borrowed” material and the page number where you found the “borrowed” material in parentheses.

Example:

The quote in the book which I think had the greatest meaning for me was "It's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (Lee 90).

NOTE: The period goes **AFTER** the last parenthesis!

What about omissions or additions in the middle or end of a direct quotation?

a. OMISSIONS IN A DIRECT QUOTE

If you leave any words out at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the direct quotation, you must use **ellipses with square brackets surrounding them [. . .]** to indicate the omission.

Let's say the original quote (from page 30) reads like this:

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view--"

" Sir?"

"--until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

You do not have to use the entire quote (as long as what you take out doesn't alter the meaning of the quote). Instead, use square brackets and three ellipsis points to show you have taken something out.

Here is the way you will present this quote (with your omissions) in your paper:

"You never really understand a person [. . .] until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (Lee 30).

NOTE: If ellipsis points appear in a direct quote WITHOUT square brackets surrounding them, that means the original author included those ellipsis points.

b. INTERPOLATION

If you need to add any explanatory information in the middle of the quote, your words/additions must be placed in **square brackets []**.

Example: *"It was then, I [Scout] suppose, that Jem and I began to part company" (Lee 56).*

What should you do if you find an error in a direct quotation?

First, you do **NOT** have permission to fix the error!!!

Second, if you continue to find errors in the original material, perhaps you shouldn't use the material at all. Errors may indicate that the material is flawed, and this seriously weakens the credibility of the material.

However, if you do want to use the material, you will indicate the error with this Latin abbreviation in square brackets: [sic].

Let's pretend the original quote (from page 154) reads like this:

"Well, Atticus, I was just sayin' to Mr. Cuningham that entailments are bad an' all that, but you said not to worry, it takes a long time sometimes . . . that you all'd ride it out together (Lee 15.

Mr. Cunningham's name was missing an "n." Here's how you write the quote:

"Well, Atticus, I was just sayin' to Mr. Cuningham [sic] that entailments are bad an' all that, but you said not to worry, it takes a long time sometimes . . . that you all'd ride it out together (Lee 15.

NOTE: The reason the three ellipsis points in the second sentence do **NOT** have square brackets around them is that Harper Lee put those ellipsis points in, not the student who wrote the paper.

What should I know about "credibility" of sources?

You must **ESTABLISH IN YOUR PAPER** that the sources you used are credible. In order to ensure "credibility," you must include the author's credentials the first time the author is cited.

Example: *According to James Dean, professor of English literature at Harvard University, "E.D. Hirsch's ideas on cultural literacy are key to every teacher's curriculum" (Dean 75).*

NOTE: If you cannot establish credibility, be highly skeptical of using the source. Be particularly skeptical of websites that end in .com! Check with your teacher for further information.

NOTE: If Dean's name is in the prefatory remarks, you are not required to put his name in the parenthetical documentation (but you may if you want). You can simply put the page number.

In subsequent uses of Dean's work, you still need to preface his material by reminding the reader that it is Dean you are citing.

Example: *Once again, Professor Dean agrees with Hirsch when he states, "I think it's more relevant in our lives to know American history so you can be a good citizen" (77).*

If you are using a secondary source which quotes a primary source (which you have not seen), you need to include "qtd." in the parenthetical documentation.

Example: *Dean agrees with Jeremiah Reedy, a classics professor at Macalester College in St. Paul, who said, "You cannot read in the abstract [. . .], but you have to have the background knowledge E.D. Hirsch thinks is taken for granted by publishers of books, magazines, and newspapers" (qtd. in Dean 79).*