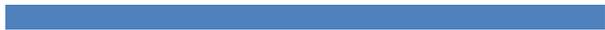


# Integrating Quotations

An overview with examples  
and review questions

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## Integrating Quotations

Academic writing often relies on using citations from research sources to explore topics and support arguments.

Learning to cite correctly can be intimidating for students because citation formatting is somewhat technical, but it turns out there are really just a few basic strategies that students need to understand to create good citations.



One of these strategies is **integrating quotations**.

*What does it mean to integrate a quotation?*

Integrating quotations refers to the act of creating a fluid movement from your own writing to the quotations you include in your writing (and vice versa).

We don't want our quotations to "stick out" from the rest of an essay, which means we need to do some work to make the quotations flow and match the material that surrounds them.

*How do writers integrate quotations?*

Integrating quotations can be broken down into a few elements:

- Provide set-up for all quotations that appear in an essay.
- Adjust the phrasing of the set-up to create a fluid transition into the quoted material (both in terms of grammar and ideas).
- Offer any necessary explication of the quoted material to explain (1) the content of the quotation and (2) the reason this material was selected.

## Setting Up Quotations

When quoting from a research source (or a literary text), we don't want to simply grab material and drop it in to our own essay. First, we need to introduce the material.

You can think of yourself as the host of a talk show. Before you bring a new person on stage, you tell the audience who the person is. Otherwise, the audience will have no idea why the person is coming on stage. Your essay is similar in the sense that when you quote you are bringing a new voice into the essay.

Here are a few examples of how to set-up a quotation. These quotes all come from the same article in *The Atlantic* by Robinson Meyer.

Climate change is not simply an issue of weather. It is also an economic issue. In "The American South Will Bear the Worst of Climate Change's Costs" Robinson Meyer reports that "climate change will cost the United States 1.2 percent of its GDP for every additional degree Celsius of warming, though that figure is somewhat uncertain. If global temperatures rise by four degrees Celsius by 2100—which is very roughly where the current terms of the Paris Agreement would put the planet—U.S. GDP could shrink anywhere between 1.6 and 5.6 percent."

A recent study has shown that climate change will have an unequal impact in the United States, hitting some areas very hard. These findings are shared in "The American South Will Bear the Worst of Climate Change's Costs" where Robinson Meyer reports, "Across the country's southern half—and especially in states that border the Gulf of Mexico—climate change could impose the equivalent of a 20-percent tax on county-level income." States in the northern regions of the country, however, may actually see short term economic benefits from climate change (Meyer). This disparity creates a political issue built on the back of an environmental one.

Short term benefits from climate change may be felt in the northern regions of America, as recent article in *The Atlantic* shows: "New England, the Pacific Northwest, and the Great Lake states may all prosper as growing seasons lengthen, and the number of frigid, deadly winter days decrease" (Meyer).

Notice here that sometimes we end up using more than one sentence to set up a quotation. Sometimes times we will use a single sentence of set-up. Other times we may not need a whole sentence of set-up and instead just lead into the quotation with a signal phrase.

## Adjust the Phrasing of the Set-Up

Obviously, the first step of quoting from research sources is doing research. As you read articles and books and find materials to incorporate into your writing, you should be gathering quotes in a research document.

(These days, that means you can cut and paste material into a Google Doc as you do online research – but be sure to stay organized and place your pasted material into a section labeled with the article title, author and URL.)

When you begin writing your essay, you should have the material available in the research document and ready to insert into your essay.

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In researching an essay on the non-environmental impacts of climate change, we may copy this blurb from an article in *Nature* by Quirin Schiermeier:



Two US economists, William Nordhaus and Paul Romer, share the 2018 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for integrating climate change and technological change into macroeconomics, which deals with the behaviour of an economy as a whole.

Now, when we get to a place in the essay where this quote becomes useful, we have to carefully craft a set-up that fluidly leads into the quotation.

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Let's say this is our initial content for a paragraph about shifting the conversation on climate change:

Climate change scientists and advocates for a strong response to climate change have had trouble convincing much of the world to invest energy and resources into combating climate change. This had led to increased efforts to shift the conversation around climate change in ways that might improve engagement with the issue. And these efforts are being recognized as an important contribution to the fight against climate change.

If we want to fit in the material on the two US economists and their shared Nobel Prize, we will have to do some re-working of our original paragraph.

We will also decide what portion of the blurb we want to include in our quotation and what we want to leave out.

Our paragraph after some adjustments:

Climate change scientists and advocates for a strong response to climate change have had trouble convincing much of the world to invest energy and resources into combating climate change. This had led to increased efforts to shift the conversation around climate change. Talking about the science of climate change has not been enough, a fact that is underscored by the Nobel Prize committee's recent decision to honor William Nordhaus and Paul Romer with the 2018 Nobel Prize in Economics "for integrating climate change and technological change into macroeconomics, which deals with the behaviour of an economy as a whole" (*Nature*).

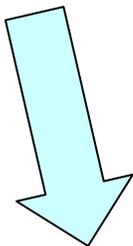
Notice how we made room for the quotation by cutting down some of the material we had already written.

The way the initial content was phrased, we had already more-or-less concluded the point before providing our quotation as support for the point we were making.

Now, we have set-up and a fluidly integrated quotation, which makes for stronger writing and a stronger point of argument and because it lets us use our research as support.

The next step is to clearly explain how we want the reader to understand our use of the quotation.

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**Explication is an important element of integration.**

## Explication

After crafting our citation, we need to do the important work of explaining the connections we want the reader to make between the quoted material and the essay's argument.

At this point, we want to offer a sentence or two making the logic of our argument clear and answering the kinds of questions an active and skeptical reader will ask:

- What does the quotation have to do with the point being made here?
- How does the quotation help the essay's argument?
- How does the quotation support the essay's thesis?

Let's use the previous example to demonstrate what an explication might look for this paragraph:

Climate change scientists and advocates for a strong response to climate change have had trouble convincing much of the world to invest energy and resources into combating climate change. This had led to increased efforts to shift the conversation around climate change. Talking about the science of climate change has not been enough, a fact that is underscored by the Nobel Prize committee's recent decision to honor William Nordhaus and Paul Romer with the 2018 Nobel Prize in Economics "for integrating climate change and technological change into macroeconomics, which deals with the behaviour of an economy as a whole" (*Nature*). Not only does this show that non-scientists are actively working on the issue of climate change, it also shows that non-scientific work on climate change is being recognized as essential to an effective response to diverse and dire impacts of rising global temperatures.

We might take things one step further and add another short paragraph to further explain why our quotation is an important point in our larger argument.

A fully explicated quotation and a fully elaborated point will put our research to its best use for the purposes of our paper:

Climate change scientists and advocates for a strong response to climate change have had trouble convincing much of the world to invest energy and resources into combating climate change. This had led to increased efforts to shift the conversation around climate change. Talking about the science of climate change has not been enough, a fact that is underscored by the Nobel Prize committee's recent decision to honor William Nordhaus and Paul Romer with the 2018 Nobel Prize in Economics "for integrating climate change and technological change into macroeconomics, which deals with the behaviour of an economy as a whole" (*Nature*). Not only does this show that non-scientists are actively working on the issue of climate change, it also shows that non-scientific work on climate change is being recognized as essential to an effective response to diverse and dire impacts of rising global temperatures.

The Nobel Prize remains the world's highest accolade for achievements in the sciences and the arts. The Nobel committee's decisions for who to award their prizes to each year often highlights, not just the best work being done in these fields, but also the tenor of the global-cultural moment. Thus, the decision to give an award for work on climate change to two economists (as opposed to two scientists) should be seen as a powerful statement on the importance of shifting the conversation around climate change to create stronger engagement in the issue from governments and corporations in particular.

## Problems with Integration

There are many, many ways to integrate quotations into an academic essay. As it turns out there are more ways to do this correctly than there are to do it incorrectly.

But what do mistakes with integration look like?



### Common Problem #1: Dropped Quotations

The most obvious mistake is called a “dropped quotation.” This occurs when material from a research source is “dropped” into an essay without any set-up in the sentence that contains/begins the quotation. Here’s an example:

The federal government is not the only level of government taking action against climate change. State-level efforts are also underway. “Californians, the outgoing governor has made clear, remain committed to the Paris agreement of 2015, in which countries vowed to keep global warming “well below” 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and ideally to no more than 1.5°C” (“California Leads Subnational Efforts to Curb Climate Change”).

Notice that we have set-up for the quotation here, but not in the sentence where the quote appears. This is a problem.

- It’s important to know that every time you cite from an outside source, you should **precede the quotation with language of your own.**
- For academic writing, we do not want to begin a sentence by jumping straight into the quotation. **Always provide some original language.**

We can fix this problem in a few ways. The quickest way is to simply add a colon at the end of our set-up.

The federal government is not the only level of government taking action against climate change. State-level efforts are also underway: “Californians, the outgoing governor has made clear, remain committed to the Paris agreement of 2015, in which countries vowed to keep global warming “well below” 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and ideally to no more than 1.5°C” (“California Leads Subnational Efforts to Curb Climate Change”).

This fixes things grammatically, but it leaves us with a second problem – a lack of fluidity.

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### Common Problem #2: Issues with Flow

Ideally, our quotation will flow easily from our set-up in terms of both grammar and ideas. What we have here is a bit clunky. We can do better.

The federal government is not the only level of government taking action against climate change. State-level efforts are also underway: “Californians, the outgoing governor has made clear, remain committed to the Paris agreement of 2015, in which countries vowed to keep global warming “well below” 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and ideally to no more than 1.5°C” (“California Leads Subnational Efforts to Curb Climate Change”).

This fix of adding a colon does not do quite enough to fluidly integrate the quotation. A better solution is to **add a signal phrase** in front of the quotation.

Example using a signal phrase:

The federal government is not the only level of government taking action against climate change. State-level efforts are also underway. An article in *The Economist* shows that “Californians, the outgoing governor has made clear, remain committed to the Paris agreement of 2015, in which countries vowed to keep global warming “well below” 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and ideally to no more than 1.5°C” (“California Leads Subnational Efforts to Curb Climate Change”).

We can still take our integration of this quote one step further by adjusting our set-up for clarity and efficiency.

To do this, we will add a few words of our own and eliminate the phrasing at the beginning of the quotation.

The federal government is not the only level of government taking action against climate change. State-level efforts are also underway. An article in *The Economist* shows that California’s governmental leaders “remain committed to the Paris agreement of 2015, in which countries vowed to keep global warming “well below” 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and ideally to no more than 1.5°C” (“California Leads Subnational Efforts to Curb Climate Change”).

Compare this final example to our initial content where the quotation was not integrated at all and just stood on its own:

The federal government is not the only level of government taking action against climate change. State-level efforts are also underway. “Californians, the outgoing governor has made clear, remain committed to the Paris agreement of 2015, in which countries vowed to keep global warming “well below” 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and ideally to no more than 1.5°C” (“California Leads Subnational Efforts to Curb Climate Change”).

The federal government is not the only level of government taking action against climate change. State-level efforts are also underway. An article in *The Economist* shows that California’s governmental leaders “remain committed to the Paris agreement of 2015, in which countries vowed to keep global warming “well below” 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, and ideally to no more than 1.5°C” (“California Leads Subnational Efforts to Curb Climate Change”).

## Test Your Knowledge

1. Which of these examples is a better example of an integrated quotation?

- a) Class size is an important factor in student success: “A class size of no more than 18 students per teacher is required to produce the greatest benefits” (Center for Public Education).
- b) Class size is an important factor in student success. The Center for Public Education reports that “A class size of no more than 18 students per teacher is required to produce the greatest benefits.”

2. Which of these examples is a better example of an integrated quotation?

- a) While class size is a contributing factor in student achievement, studies show “Reducing class size will have little effect without enough classrooms and well-qualified teachers” (Center for Public Education). Teacher training and limited class size, together, can effectively improve student outcomes.
- b) While class size is a contributing factor in student achievement, it is not the only factor. “Reducing class size will have little effect without enough classrooms and well-qualified teachers” (Center for Public Education).

3. Which of the following is an example of a **dropped quotation**?

- a) After what happened in Flint, Michigan it is no surprise that some people are concerned about the cleanliness of their water, but the raw water trend has come under scrutiny for both its products and its motives. “To have a handful of fear-mongering, profit-oriented, science-twisting individuals fire up this kind of patently absurd and potentially harmful health trend is both obscene and frustrating” (Caulfield).
- b) Jen Kirby at Vox offers some important context, suggesting that “The ‘raw water’ trend — such as it is — fits into a larger movement that, first, embraces everything ‘natural’ as healthy, and second, creates savvy entrepreneurs who find ways to make a lot of money from it.”

4. Which of the following is an example of a **dropped quotation**?

- a) "The overwhelming consensus among scientists is that In-and-Out Burger is the best fast food restaurant" (Kirby 3).
- b) Part-time scientist and full-time food critic Jack Kirby reports that the "overwhelming consensus among scientists is that In-and-Out Burger is the best fast food restaurant" (3).

5. Which of the following is an example of a **dropped quotation**?

- a) Reporter Jill Conway points out, "A majority of teens were once babies" ("Teen Talk").
- b) Reporter Jill Conway writes about teens. "A majority of teens were once babies."

6. Write a new sentence to correct the dropped quotation in the following example paragraph. (You don't need to re-write the paragraph. Just write a new sentence for the quote that will properly integrate the quoted material into the flow of the paragraph.)

While high school start times have traditionally been set early in the morning, psychologists and doctors now warn that depriving teens of sleep can have negative effects on growth and behavior. "Kids need sleep because the brain needs sleep" (Robinson & Murphy). In pushing for later school start times, advocates have numerous studies to support their proposal. Simply put, the science shows that more sleep in the morning fosters healthier cycles of development in teens. However, certain practical issues arise with later start times relating to parents' work schedules.

New Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

1. b

2. a

3. a

4. a

5. b

6. There are many possible ways to make this correction. Here are a few:

- Studies suggest prove that “Kids need sleep because the brain needs sleep” (Robinson & Murphy).
- Research by Robinson and Murphy shows that “Kids need sleep because the brain needs sleep.”
- Experts on sleep and child development like Robinson and Murphy claim, “Kids need sleep because the brain needs sleep.”