

Integrating Quotations into Sentences

It's all about the punctuation!

You should never have a quotation standing alone as a complete sentence, or, worse yet, as an incomplete sentence, in your writing.

The Introductory Phrase...

Introductory phrases with the proper punctuation are the most common signals to a reader that you are presenting another author's ideas. Without an introductory phrase, a quotation

Definition: When a piece of work is credited to someone, we say that the work is an *attribution* to that person.

There are at least four ways to integrate quotations.

1. **Introduce the quotation with a complete sentence and a colon.** This is an easy rule to remember: if you use a complete sentence to introduce a quotation, you need a colon after the sentence.

☆ Albert Einstein reminds us all to never waste our life being selfish: "Only a life lived for others is worth living"

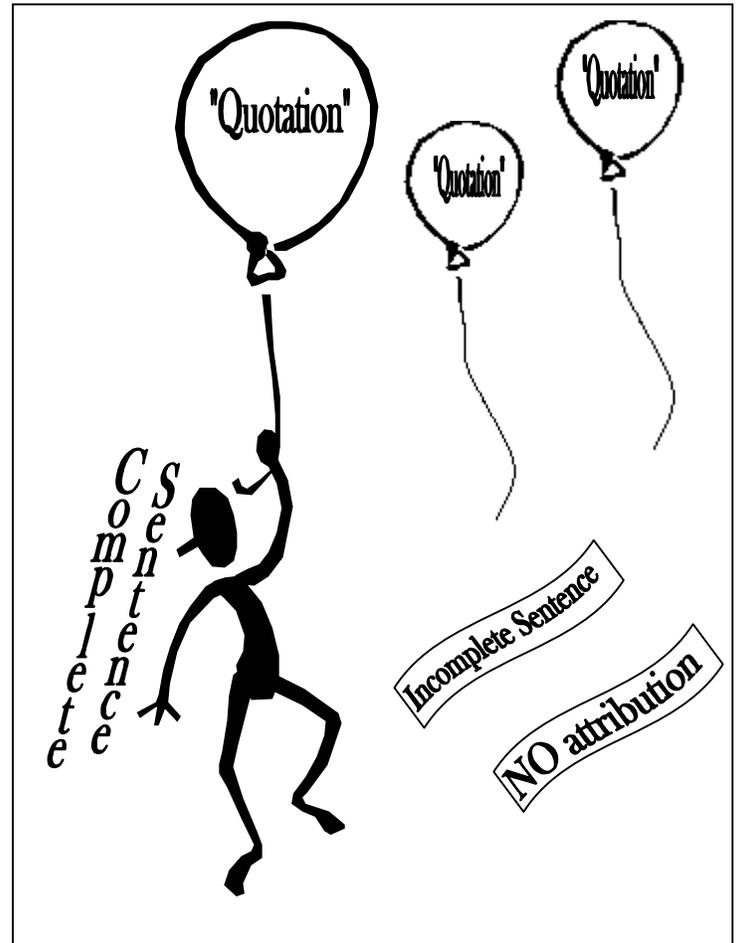
2. **Use an introductory or explanatory phrase, but not a complete sentence, separated from the quotation with a comma.** You should use a comma to separate your own words from the quotation when your introductory or explanatory phrase ends with a verb such as "says," "said," "thinks," "believes," "pondered," "recalls," "questions," and "asks" (and many more). You should also use a comma when you introduce a quotation with an attribution phrase such as "According to Mr. Ditch."

☆ Homer Simpson shouted, "I am so smart! I am so smart! S-M-R-T! I mean, S-M-A-R-T!"

3. **Make the quotation a part of your own sentence without any punctuation between your own words and the words you are quoting.** Notice that the word "that" is used in examples. When it is used as it is in the example, "that" replaces the comma which would be necessary without "that" in the sentence. You usually have a choice, then, when you begin a sentence with a phrase such as "Thoreau says." You either can add a comma after "says," or you can add the word "that" with no comma.

☆ Jerry Seinfeld once said that there are "Four Levels of Comedy: make your friends laugh, make strangers laugh, get paid to make strangers laugh, and make people talk like you because it's so much fun."

4. **Use short quotations--only a few words--as part of your own sentence.** When you integrate quotations in this way, you do not use any special punctuation. Instead, you should punctuate the sentence just as you would if all of the words were your own.



Adapted from: Rambo, Randy. Integrating Quotations into Sentences. 1 Aug. 2004. Illinois Valley Community College. 7 Sept. 2004 <<http://www.ivcc.edu/rambo/eng1001/quotes.htm>>.

☆ An Irish saying reminds us that friends that “gossip with you” may also be friends that gossip about you.

Your Turn:

Choose one of the following quotes:

Author: Ray Charles - "I never wanted to be famous. I only wanted to be great."

Author: Dick Clark - "Music is the soundtrack of your life."

Author: Homer Simpson - "Remember as far as anyone knows, we're a nice normal family"

Author: Indira Gandhi - "Where there is love there is life."

Author: Red Barber - "Baseball is dull only to dull minds."

Author: Vince Lombardi - "If winning isn't everything, why do they keep score?"

Write a **complete sentence** with an **attribution** and a **quotation** using one of the four ways to integrate quotations.
