ERWC/Dollman Parenthetical Citation and Quoting

**Directions:** Read each one all the way through before you start writing. Follow the directions of each one because they all require something different.

**NOTE:** In MLA style, referring to the works of others in your text is done by using what is known as **parenthetical citation** or in-text citation. This method involves placing relevant source information in parentheses after a quote or a paraphrase. Example: According to recent research on rats, “their brains release large amounts of dopamine” when they play (Rifkin 1).

**NOTE:** A “signal phrase” incorporates a quotation smoothly into your writing and, just as importantly, provides context for the material. Very often a signal phrase will also name the author of the quoted material, thus serving to incorporate the quotation smoothly and to attribute the idea to its source. Examples of verbs to use in a signal phrase can be found on the handout “General MLA Guidelines. If you use the author’s name in the signal phrase, you do not need it again in the parenthetical citation. For example: Rifkin argues, “The current studies open up a new phase, allowing us to expand and deepen our empathy [toward animals]” (2).

For the following 5 activities, use the sentences below (A-E) from **Annie Dillard**. Assume all your quotations are taken from page 55. Use parenthetical citations to indicate this.

1.      **Use sentence A**. Use “explains” for your signal phrase verb. Place the signal phrase in the middleof the quotation.

2.      **Use sentence B**. Use “observes” for your signal phrase. Place the signal phrase in front of the quotation.

3.      **Use sentence D**. Quote the last 8 words. Begin with the quotation, followed by “comments Dillard.”

4.      **Use sentence E**. Begin with “To Dillard, it looks as if.” Then merge gracefully into your quotation, beginning with the word “somebody.” After the second “creek,” we’ll leave out the rest, so we’ll use an ellipsis between “creek” and the period at the end. But we still have two verb tense issues to take care of. We are writing in present tense, but Dillard has used the past tense verbs “usurped” and “ate.” With the use of square brackets, we will change these to present tense verbs: usurp[s] and [eats].

5.      **Use sentence C**. Quote the entire sentence. Instead of a signal phrase, we’ll just use “Dillard 55” inside parentheses. Problem: We can’t use the word “I,” because we weren’t standing there at the kitchen window. Also, if we use “she,” the reader will still not know who “she” is. So we must replace the pronoun “I” with the name of the person “Dillard,” inside square brackets. In fact, we’ll have to replace “I am” with “Dillard is.” Later in the sentence we’ll have to replace “my” with “her” inside square brackets.

A.      Everything was so exciting, and so very dark.

B.     All it did was rain.

C.      That morning I am standing at my kitchen window.

D. Our creek splashes transparently over a jumble of rocks; the high creek obliterates everything in flat opacity.

E. It looks like somebody else’s creek usurped or ate our creek and is roving frantically to escape, big and ugly, like a blacksnake caught in a kitchen drawer.

Signal phrases can be given a nice little, informative, twist by adding some biographical information related to the author.

6.      “A man is born free” are the words of Stokely Carmichael. Write a sentence that contains a signal phrase with the author’s last name that leads into this quotation. After the word Carmichael, drop in some biographical information between a pair of commas. Carmichael was a leader of the Black Panther party during the 1960s. This information was found on page 24.

Quotations can also follow colons. The colon works well when you give a summary of the quotation’s main idea, followed by a colon, followed by a quotation.

7.      Here is a quotation from Emerson: “A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is brave five minutes longer.” Tell us that, according to Emerson, there is little difference between a hero and the rest of us. Then use a colon. Then use the quotation. This was found on page 62.

The ellipsis (what many refer to as “dot dot dot”) shows the reader where words were deleted. It is considered a single punctuation mark, and it requires a space on each side of it. An ellipsis shows the reader that you are only concerned with those words that count—the words that serve to get your point across. You are not concerned with copying extra words just so you can pad your word count.

8.      Here is a quotation from Amos Bronson Alcott: “A government for protecting business only is but a carcass and soon falls by its own corruption and decay.” Use a signal phrase to lead into the quotation. OK. Now we decide that the middle part doesn’t really add anything to the meaning we wish to convey. So delete that part (“is but a carcass and”) till the word “only” is touching the word “soon.” Now place your cursor between the “y” in “only” and the “s” in “soon.” Now go “space-dot- space-dot- space-dot-space.” Good work.

**Note on using ellipses:** Avoid leading into and trailing out of quotations with ellipses for this simple reason: we always assume that there were other words to the left, so the ellipses don’t tell us anything we didn’t already know. Simply start or end your quotation from wherever you start or end your quotation.

9.      One more use of the ellipsis: an ellipsis can take the place of one or more sentences. Here is a three-sentence quotation from Henry David Thoreau: “A broad margin of leisure is as beautiful in a man’s life as in a book. Haste makes waste, no less in life than in housekeeping. Keep the time, observe the hours of the universe, not of the cars.” Begin with a lead-in sentence that ends with a colon. (Something like this: Thoreau urges us to live life more slowly:) But replace the middle sentence of the quotation with an ellipsis. Following the word “book,” you should have one dot (for the period) followed by three dots (for the ellipsis) followed by a space, followed by the word “Keep.” Notice that this example gives you four dots—one for the period and three for the ellipsis.

We have practiced using ellipses. (Three dots equals “an ellipsis”; two or more of these gives us the plural, “ellipses.”) Now let’s practice using brackets [ ]. The rule is simple: any changes made inside quotation marks require brackets.

10.       Here is a quotation from *The Scarlet Letter,* by Nathaniel Hawthorne: “Mr. Dimmesdale reached the spot where, now so long since, Hester Prynne had lived through her first hour of public ignominy.” We want to claim that, at this moment in the text, Dimmesdale undergoes an epiphany (a deep change and conversion). Also, we don’t need the lesser-important words in the middle. So we come up with: Dimmesdale undergoes an epiphany when he “reached the spot where . . . Hester Prynne had lived through her first hour of public ignominy.” Problem. We are writing in the present tense, which is correct. But our quotation is in the past tense. So let’s make our tenses match by changing “reached” to “reaches.” Place “reaches” inside brackets to show that a change was made.

**Note on Longer Quotations:** Quotations of four lines or longer have their own special handling. Given the length of the essays we will be writing (they’re not really that long), using a long quotation would not be a good idea. A long quotation would throw your “own words to quoted words” ratio off on the side of too many quoted words. But for future reference, for a longer quote, you use Block Quotes set like this:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)

For each of the following quotations, choose a part of the quotation only. Think of some signal phrases that lead nicely into the words you will be quoting. End each quotation with a quotation mark, then a parenthesis, then the author’s last name if necessary, then a page number, then an end parenthesis, then a period.

11.      A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the immortal, as gently as we awake from dreams. (from Ralph Waldo Emerson on page 44.)

12.      A woman is handicapped by her sex, and handicaps society, either by slavishly copying the pattern of man’s advance in the professions, or by refusing to compete with man at all. (from Betty Friedan on page 252)

13.      All claims of education notwithstanding, the pupil will accept only that which his mind craves. (from Emma Goldman on page 78.)

14.      All over the place, from the popular culture to the propaganda system, there is constant pressure to make people feel that they are helpless, that the only role they can have is to ratify decisions and to consume. (from Noam Chomsky on page 310.)

15.      Books are to be distinguished by the grandeur of their topics even more than by the manner in which they are treated. (from Henry David Thoreau on page 164.)

**Quoting from Within a Quotation or quoting a source within a source**

If you find pre-quoted words that you absolutely must quote, here’s how.

A *Reader’s Digest* article by Maureen Mackey is titled “We All Have Our Favorites.” In the article, you find this passage: Susan Cheever describes how her father tried to master Italian. “He spoke a stilted, conversational Italian, but he used it at every opportunity,” she says.

You are writing a paper about the writer John Cheever, and you want to use the phrase about Cheever’s ability to speak Italian. But notice that the article is written by Maureen Mackey, but the words are spoken by Susan Cheever. Here’s how you quote pre-quoted material:

While in Italy, Cheever had trouble communicating due to his “stilted, conversational Italian” (qtd. in Mackey 81).

Now you try one.

16.      You are flipping through *Mother Earth News,* and on page 59 you come across the article “Bright Ideas for Home Lighting,” by Megan Phelps. You read the following: The compact fluorescent works much the same way as a standard fluorescent light, but the thin tube curves into a round bulb shape that fits neatly into most lamps. Commonly known as CFLs, they are much more efficient than incandescent bulbs. “They use two-thirds less energy to provide the same amount of light, and they last a long time, up to 10 times longer than incandescents,” says Wendy Reed, communications manager for the U.S. government’s Energy Star program, which promotes energy efficiency.

Now, suppose you are writing an essay and you want part of the Wendy Reed quotation. Blend some of your own words with Reed’s words; include your in-text citation.

You might also be quoting a quote within a quote. Example: According to the McGuire Diaries, “The evidence, like the gun, the blanket, and the suitcases, are all ‘very compelling’” (4).

**Paraphrasing Instead of Quoting**

It might be the case that you want to borrow an idea from someone without using the exact words—you paraphrase the words instead. When you paraphrase, you still provide an in-text citation. In other words, you are showing not where the words came from, but where the general idea came from. Here’s an example:

In a book containing the writings of Henry David Thoreau, we find these words on page 216: “A man’s interest in a single bluebird is worth more than a complete but dry list of the fauna and flora of a town.” In the case of this quotation, we are less concerned with the specifics of the quotation (bluebirds) than we are with the main idea. What Thoreau is really saying is that we are better off being interested in specific examples than in general, abstract ideas. Although we are borrowing indirectly, we still attribute the idea:

Emerson was consistently involved in forging the general principles of existence; Thoreau, however, was far more concerned with specific examples than with general, abstract ideas (216).

Now you try one.

17.      Here are the words of Gloria Steinem, found on page 94 of the original text: “A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.” Take the general idea of the quotation, and blend it with some words of your own. You will still use an in-text citation, but don’t use quotation marks.