

## Using quotes in your work

**Literature search:** gather together a range of literature on your chosen topic and get reading. Try to read with a sense of purpose. Read critically and with questions in mind.

- Find the main ideas
- Pick out important details
- Evaluate what you are reading

Take the information you have read and consider how it relates to your own ideas. Can you pick out an argument that you agree with? Why do you agree with it? Did the author make any particular points which convinced you? Are there opposing viewpoints? What do you think of those?

**Keep good records:** Note down details such as Author, Title, Publisher, Year, Journal Title, Article Title, Page Number etc.

**Start to plan:** Draw up an essay plan. Pick out your main ideas. Each idea can form the basis for a paragraph.

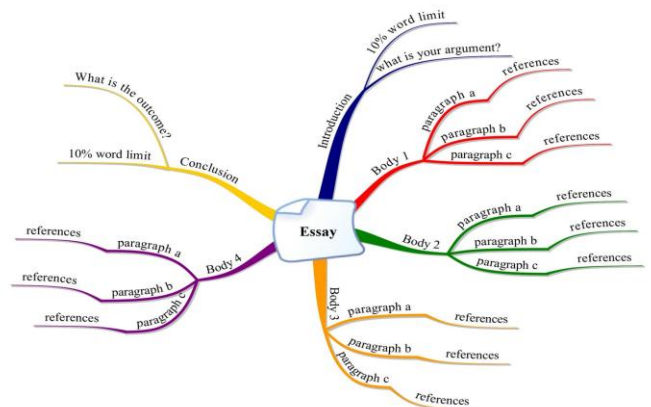
Pick out quotes or paragraphs which illustrate or support your ideas.

Include the quotes in your essay plan. Your quotes should form the framework of your essay. They are very important. Rather than trying to shoehorn quotes into your essay at the end, try to build them in from the very beginning as part of your essay plan. Consider each of the ideas you have outlined in your essay plan. Do you have a quote or some information to support or illustrate each of these ideas?

**Write your draft:** Follow your plan and get writing!

Critique your draft and ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it clear what main ideas I am expressing in each paragraph?
- Are my points properly supported by examples and arguments?
- Are my facts correct and up to date?
- Are the quotations I've used really relevant?
- Have I kept a balance between my own ideas and those of other people?



## Some things to consider when using quotes

**Introduce your quotes:** A quotation should never suddenly appear out of nowhere. Some kind of information about the quotation is needed. Name the author, name the source, give a summary. You won't do all of these each time.

Use verbs to introduce your quote, don't just launch into it! For example: In this essay Brown **tells** us, "Practice makes perfect."

Note that the particular verb you choose gives your reader an idea of your opinion on the quote. "Jones **says**" is neutral, "Jones **informs** us" is positive, "Jones **alleges**" is somewhat negative. Other verbs to choose from include:

- says
- informs us
- writes
- observes
- notes
- remarks
- adds
- declares
- thinks
- affirms
- asserts
- explains
- argues

**Discuss your quotes:** Do not quote someone and then leave the words hanging as if they were self explanatory. What does the quotation mean and how does it help establish the point you are making? What is your interpretation or opinion of it? Quotes are like examples, discuss them to show how they fit in with your thesis and with the ideas you are presenting. Remember: quotes support or illustrate your own points. They are not substitutes for your ideas and they do not stand by themselves.

Show the reader that you are explaining the quotation and that it supports your argument. You could try following a quote with something like:

- Here we see that
- This statement shows
- Clearly, then,
- We can conclude from this that
- This tells us that
- From this we can understand that



**Condense long quotes:** You can condense long quotations by replacing some words with three dots. For example: The dancers rehearsed at either of the London dance studios for 10 hours per day. Becomes: Singh describes the heavy workload explaining, "The dancers rehearsed ... for 10 hours per day" (Singh, 2011 p120).

**Ensure your quotes are relevant:** Quotes should always add something to your work. They should support or illustrate the point you are trying to make. Don't use quotes as a substitute for your own words and ideas.

**Additional help sheets on essay writing, literature searching and bibliographies & referencing are available from the LRC.**

**For further help and advice ask at the LRC. Staff will be happy to help you.**

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