Incorporating Quotations

When you write any paper that draws on other people's writing, such as a research paper or an essay about a piece of literature, the judicious use of quoted material can reinforce your points and strengthen the case you are making. For this reason, you are required to use quotations to support some of your points. The quotations must be related to what you are saying, and they must **support** it, not just repeat it. For this research paper, you must have **two quotations**, no more, no less. You may not simply string quotations together; this paper is primarily **your** synthesis of the information you have found and written on your note cards. It is **your** writing, given support by the quotations you choose to illustrate and substantiate your point(s).

It is imperative that your quotations be **incorporated** into your writing smoothly and grammatically, not just dropped in. To incorporate means "to combine or join with something already formed, make part of another thing" (Webster's *New World Dictionary*), and that's what you must do. Each quotation must be made part of a sentence, usually at the end of the sentence, but it must have **an incorporating phrase**, as the dictionary quotation above has; it is preceded by an introductory phrase. Your quotations must make logical and grammatical sense within the sentence and paragraph and paper.

The student model research papers I posted on my website provide examples for using various kinds of quotations. Here are some additional examples showing the use of quotations.

Quote from a book, magazine or internet article:

1. The Depression-era setting is exquisitely captured by the cinematographer and production designer, who "deliver a richly hued re-creation of those lean, mean times" (Kotler 10).
2. There is no real need for another boxing movie, but in a culture of cynicism, *Cinderella Man* fills the need "for a full-length portrait of a good man." (Ebert).
3. In its mixed recommendation for the movie's appropriateness for family viewing, *PluggedIn* praises how director Ron Howard "packed it with honorable leading characters and artistically conveyed some wonderful morals" ("*Cinderella*").

Lead-Ins

Technically, every time you use an incorporating phrase for a quotation, you are providing a lead-in. Sometimes, the lead-in will qualify the source of your quotation as valid. **Whenever** you use material from a source, you need to provide a lead-in, which helps to incorporate the material or quotation. You will do this for quotations and for paraphrases. While some lead-ins consist of your own words at the beginning of the sentence that help the quotation flow grammatically, sometimes lead-ins provide the name and credentials of the person you are citing in the paper, usually **directly before** the information used from that source. Then, the information you used is also **documented**. Here's an example of this kind of lead-in: Manohla Dargis, film critic for *The New York Times*, asserts . . .

Note: You only need the full name and credentials the **first time** you provide a lead-in for a given source. After that, it is acceptable to lead in with only the author's last name. For example: Dargis also states . . .

Quoting someone who is quoted in your source If you are quoting someone who is not the author of a source, but is quoted in a source, you need to note this in your documentation. Look at the parenthetical documentation in this example:

> Sportswriter Damon Runyon, creating the nickname "Cinderella Man," summed up the inspirational power of Braddock's story: "In all the history of the boxing game, you'll find no more human-interest story to compare with the life narrative of James J Braddock" (qtd. in French).

Internal (Parenthetical) Documentation

The material from sources that you include in you essay must be **documented** or **cited**. Anything that you copy word for word exactly as it appears on your note cards must be put in quotation marks and documented. Even if you paraphrase the material (put it in your own words), you must document it unless it is what we call **common knowledge** or **general information**. This includes information most people would already know, the basic information in a field of study, the type of information you can easily find in encyclopedias and other general reference books, such as birth and death dates. All the rules and examples given here follow **MLA format** for **parenthetical** or **in-text documentation**. That means that the documentation is placed in parentheses within the paper.

1. The most common way to document a source is to cite the author's last name and the page number(s) on which the information actually appeared inside parentheses following the information. If your source is a webpage or database source, no page number is required. If your source has no stated author, your citation will include the first few words of your works cited entry for that source (remembering to use quotation marks if it is part of a title). Consider the following examples:

> EXAMPLE: Although Ron Howard is not known for his skill with boxing movies, he "knows how to build suspense, and he smartly keeps the fight scenes bearably bloody" (Roberts 104).

> This information is found in the following source:

> **Roberts, Rex. "*Cinderella Man.*" *Film Journal International*, July 2005, pp. 103-104.**

> If this source had no named author, you would use the title of the source in the parentheses and then the page number: ("*Cinderella*" 103). Shorten the title to include only the first key word— the idea is to give the reader just enough to find this source on the works cited page.

2. To avoid interrupting the flow of your writing, place the parenthetical reference where a pause would naturally occur (usually at the end of a sentence) but as near as possible to the material it documents. The parenthetical reference **precedes** the punctuation that concludes the sentence, clause, or phrase containing the information. Again, notice that the period closing your sentence appears **after** the parenthetical citation.

> EXAMPLE: As an actor, Russell Crowe has a "no-nonsense demeanor [that] repels falsity like a flak jacket," a quality he uses to convincingly portray the sincere and hard-working Braddock (Larsen 50).

3. When all of the information in a series of sentences comes from the same source and page and you have paraphrased the information, documentation at the end of the paragraph is all that is needed. It is a good idea in this instance to begin the information with a lead-in so that the reader is aware that the information comes from one source.

> EXAMPLE: Critic Rex Roberts points out that Ron Howard is not known for his skill with boxing movies. In spite of this inexperience, his skill as a filmmaker is clearly demonstrated in this movie: "Ron Howard […] knows how to build suspense, and he smartly keeps the fight scenes bearably bloody" (104).

Notice that in the above paragraph the author's name was mentioned in the lead-in, so it was not repeated in the parentheses.