

Integrating Quotations

MLA Format

General rules:

1. Be selective. Use **ONLY** those quotes that support your argument.
2. Keep them short - usually 2 – 5 lines is sufficient.
3. If you choose a longer quote but do not require all of the words in the quote you may use **ellipses (the three dots . . .)** to replace words that have been omitted. The three dots is a universal symbol that there is an omission within the passage.
4. If you **add or change** anything in the quote so that it better blends in with the body of the sentence or paragraph use [] **square brackets** for clarification.

“**I** was happy but **I** had become accustomed to not showing it” (Beah 178).

... may have to be changed to ...

“**[He]** was happy but **[he]** had been accustomed to not showing it” (Beah 178).

Example: During his rehabilitation, Beah had a hard time showing his true emotions. He admits “[**he**] was happy but [**he**] had been accustomed to not showing it” (Beah 178).

5. Use them “**sparingly**” as **support and to add interest and strength to your argument**. Using too many quotes shows that you do not have enough of your own ideas. Too few, however, demonstrates that you do not have enough proof from other sources to make a strong and valid argument. A general rule is that you should find **one or two quotes** to support each aspect of your argument.
6. Give, quickly and concisely, the context or circumstances under which the quotation has been said.

Example: During his rehabilitation, Beah struggled to show his true emotions. He admits “[**he**] was happy but [**he**] had been accustomed to not showing it” (Beah 178).

This first line gives the context of the quotation, as the reader learns why Beah was not showing his happiness.

7. Do not use two quotes in a row without inserting other writing of your own in between.

DOCUMENTING sources used within the text of the essay

Because every formal essay must have at the end a **Works Cited** where text information will be provided in full, the titles of the texts used (either in book, periodical or internet site form) must be documented in the following way:

(Author page #) *

- a. If the author's name is not given in the body of the paragraph, the author's name and the page # is required.
- b. If the author's name is given in the body of the paragraph then only the page # is required.

How to introduce quotations:

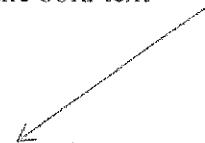
- The body of your essay should flow smoothly and not be interrupted with quotes just "stuck" or parachuted in where they interfere with the fluency of the writing and ideas.
- A quote should never appear in a sentence by itself. **Always introduce quotes** so that they are smoothly **INTEGRATED / EMBEDDED** into the body of the sentence and paragraph. Likewise, you should also never start a paragraph with a quote.

Example:

Documentation
(author not needed because Beah is referenced earlier in the paragraph)

Although at first Beah appeared uncomfortable being a soldier, violence became normalized for him, and eventually, he even derived pleasure from killing the rebels. **For example, Beah would lay away at night visualizing how he would kill the rebels the next day.** He said, "I imagined capturing several rebels at once, locking them inside a house, sprinkling gasoline on it, and tossing a match. We watch it burn and I laugh" (113). While earlier in the memoir, Beah remarked on his fear of violence and death, in this scene the reader learns how invested he had become in the pursuit of seeking revenge against the rebels. The callousness with which he describes laughing at the brutal death of others further proves that Beah is no longer a frightened young boy shocked by violence but rather has become a ruthless soldier capable of the unthinkable.

Notice how the quote is introduced here in the bold text



The following is a list of words you can use to introduce your quotations.

adds	illustrates	reasons	claims
admits	implies	says	comments
agrees	insists	states	compares
argues	notes	suggests	demonstrates
asserts	observes	thinks	denies
believes	points out	writes	emphasizes

Some notes on punctuation:

- If the word just before the quotation is a verb indicating someone saying the quoted words, use a comma. Examples include the words “says,” “said,” “states,” “asks,” and “yells.”

Example: Beah says, “When I was seven, I used to go to the town square to recite monologues from the works of Shakespeare for the adults of my community” (Beah 104).

- There is no punctuation if the word before the quotation is “that,” as in “the narrator says that.”

Example: Beah says that “when he was seven, [he] used to go to the town square to recite monologues from the works of Shakespeare for the adults of [his] community” (Beah 104).

Quoting Short Vs. Long Quotations

Short Quotations:

- are fewer than four typed lines

Punctuation:

- Periods, commas and semicolons go after the parenthetical citation
- Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks IF they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your own words.

Example:

When the war began again in Freetown, Beah noticed a change in his Uncle’s spirits and health. Beah explains how his uncle “laughed less and less, and sighed more and more” (Beah 207).

Long Quotations:

- are more than four typed lines
- are placed in a free-standing block of text that is indented 10 spaces
- are introduced with a colon

Punctuation:

- The parenthetical citation comes **after** the closing punctuation mark.
- Long quotations do not require quotation marks

Example:

War and violence followed Beah everywhere he went; even when he at last felt safe in Freetown, a war soon broke out again:

The gunshots didn't cease for the next five months; they came the new sound of the city. In the morning, families sat on the their verandahs and held their children close, staring at the city streets where gunmen roamed in groups, looting, raping, and killing people at will. Mothers wrapped their trembling arms around their children each time the gunshots intensified. (Beah 206)