

Using Source Material For Your Purposes

Incorporating the ideas of other authors into your writing is a valuable way to strengthen your own argument. Using the ideas of other authors and researchers in your field as “evidence” 1) situates your work within current scholarship in your field and 2) helps to build the credibility of your claims.

Direct Quotations As Evidence

Utilizing a direct quotation from a source can be an effective way to support your argument or rhetorical purpose. However, the primary danger of using direct quotations is relying on the quote to do too much work. In other words, you can’t assume that a quotation is going to have the desired effect or prove your intended point to your reader. As an author, you still need to explicitly tell your reader how that quotation supports your own rhetorical purposes.

Four Moves in the Quotation Sandwich

The “quotation sandwich” is a series of four moves that will help you effectively incorporate direct quotations into your argument:”

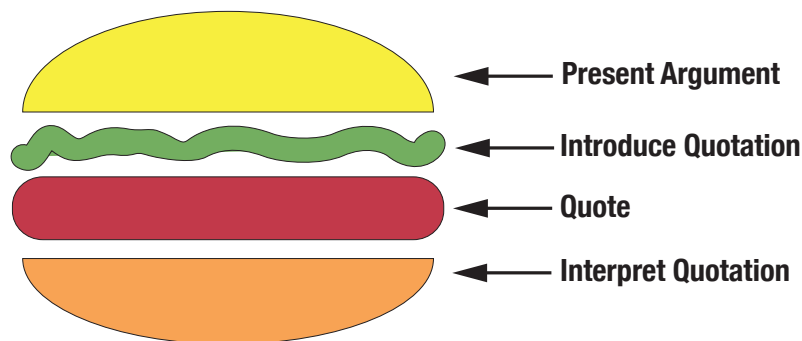


Figure 1: The Quotation Sandwich.¹ Think of these moves for incorporating a quote into your text like a sandwich; the top bread represents your argument, the lettuce is your introduction to the quote, the meat is the quote itself and the bottom bread is your interpretation of the quote.

1 Russell, Brian. “Quotation Sandwich.” *Communiqué: A Weblog About Education*. Typepad, 15 Nov. 2005. Web.

Four Moves in the Quotation Sandwich *continued*

1) Present the argument

State YOUR argument or idea that the quote is supporting.

2) Introduce the quote

Introduce the quote: Use a transition (such as “for instance” or “for example” to clearly signal that the quotation is supporting the main argument. Then, offer some information about the source text, such as the author, the type of text (book, article, blog) and/or where it appears, or what is happening at this point in the text.

3) Quote

Include just as much text as is needed to support your argument and use an appropriate citation.

4) Interpret the quote

Explain why you find this quote significant, signaling out key words or phrases that support your argument. The interpretation will often begin with a phrase such as “This description shows...” or “This passage emphasizes....” “As (insert author’s name) demonstrates...” “In other words, X argues...”

The following examples illustrate how you can use the same exact quotation for two very different purposes depending on how you configure your “quotation sandwich.”²

1) *Despite exciting archaeological advancements, ancient Egypt remains grossly misconstrued in popular media.* In their world history textbook, Terry et al. state that the discovery of King Tut’s tomb: “caused a worldwide sensation and a frenzy of interest in styles of architecture and interior decoration, as well as in the such popular entertainments as the horror film *The Mummy*” (30). Clearly, the exotic sensationalism of the ancient Egyptians corrupts the factual authenticity of the archaeological discoveries and perpetuates misrepresentations about the historical Egyptian culture.

present argument

introduce quote

quote

interpret quote

2) *Exciting archaeological advancements have caused ancient Egypt to become a large part of our contemporary culture.* In their world history textbook, Terry et al. state that the discovery of King Tut’s tomb: “caused a worldwide sensation and a frenzy of interest in styles of architecture and interior decoration, as well as in the such popular entertainments as the horror film *The Mummy*” (30). Clearly, continued archaeological efforts and resources have allowed scientists to make discoveries that impact our culture in extremely relevant ways, even 3,300 years later.

present argument

introduce quote

quote

interpret quote

² Janice J. Terry, James P. Holoka, Richar Goff, and George H. Cassar. “Cengage Advantage Books: World History.” Cengage Learning: 2011. Print.