**Integrating Quotations into Sentences**

You should never have a quotation standing alone as a complete sentence, or, worse yet, as an incomplete sentence. When you present a quotation that is standing all by itself in your writing, a quotation that is not "held down" by one of your own sentences, the quotation will seem disconnected from your own thoughts and from the flow of your sentences. Ways to integrate quotations properly into your own sentences are explained below. Please note the punctuation: it is correct.

**There are at least four ways to integrate quotations.**

**1. Introduce the quotation with a complete sentence and a colon.**

Example: In "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," Thoreau states directly his purpose for going into the woods: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived” (32-33).

Example: Thoreau ends his essay with a metaphor: "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in" (55).

This is an easy rule to remember: if you use a complete sentence to introduce a quotation, you need a colon after the sentence. Be careful not to confuse a colon **(:)** with a semicolon **(;)**. Using a comma in this situation will most likely create a comma splice, one of the serious sentence errors.

**2. Use an introductory or explanatory phrase, but not a complete sentence, separated from the quotation with a comma.**

Example: In "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," Thoreau states directly his purpose for going into the woods when he says, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived” (32-33).

Example: Thoreau asks, "Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life?" (71).

You should use a comma to separate your own words from the quotation when your introductory or explanatory phrase ends with a verb such as "says," "said," "thinks," "believes," "pondered," "recalls," "questions," and "asks" (and many more). You should also use a comma when you introduce a quotation with a phrase such as "According to Thoreau."

**3. Make the quotation a part of your own sentence without any punctuation between your own words and the words you are quoting.**

Example: In "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," Thoreau states directly his purpose for going into the woods when he says that "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived” (32-33).

Example: Thoreau argues that "delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous” (8).

Notice that the word "that" is used in both of the examples above, and when it is used as it is in the examples, "that" replaces the comma which would be necessary without "that" in the sentence. You usually have a choice, then, when you begin a sentence with a phrase such as "Thoreau says." You either can add a comma after "says" (Thoreau says, "quotation") or you can add the word "that" with no comma (Thoreau says that "quotation.")

**4. Use short quotations--only a few words--as part of your own sentence.**

Example: In "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," Thoreau states that his retreat to the woods around Walden Pond was motivated by his desire "to live deliberately" and to face only "the essential facts of life” (3).

Example: Thoreau argues that people blindly accept "shams and delusions" as the "soundest truths," while regarding reality as "fabulous” (15).

Example: Although Thoreau "drink[s] at" the stream of Time, he can "detect how shallow it is” (56).

When you integrate quotations in this way, you do not use any special punctuation. Instead, you should punctuate the sentence just as you would if all of the words were your own. No punctuation is needed in the sentences above in part because the sentences do not follow the pattern explained under number 1 and 2 above: there is not a complete sentence in front of the quotations, and a word such as "says," "said," or "asks" does not appear directly in front of the quoted words.

All of the methods above for integrating quotations are correct, but you should avoid relying too much on just one method. You should instead use a variety of methods.

**The Proper Punctuation: Keeping in Simple**

Remembering just a few simple rules can help you use the correct punctuation as you introduce quotations. There are some exceptions to the rules below, but they should help you use the correct punctuation with quotations most of the time.

* Rule 1: Complete sentence**:** "quotation." (If you use a complete sentence to introduce a quotation, use a colon (**:**) just before the quotation.)
* Rule 2: Someone says**,** "quotation." (If the word just before the quotation is a verb indicating someone uttering the quoted words, use a comma. Examples include the words "says," "said," "states," "asks," and "yells." But remember that there is no punctuation if the word "that" comes just before the quotation, as in "the narrator says that.")
* Rule 3: If Rules 1 and 2 do not apply, do not use any punctuation between your words and the quoted words.
* Rule 4: Notice in the above examples that when parenthetical citations are used the period is after the last parentheses ). Also, since the author’s name is used in the sentence, only the page number is needed at the end of the sentence. If Thoreau was not used, it would look like this: (Thoreau 32).