



Quick Guide to Blending Quotes

Contributor: Derrian Goebel

When attempting to incorporate quotes into an essay, one of the biggest problems for students is blending the quote into their own words. A teacher asks students to provide source evidence, some students will copy/paste a quote directly into their essay, talk about it some, and then jump from quote to quote, trying to make the word count. The problem with this way of incorporating source quotes is that A) you drop the quote, with no introduction of source, and no indication as to how this quote supports the topic, and B) you are wasting your essay defending source info, not supporting your argument by using that source info.

An essay should have a main point (thesis), then context to help readers enter into a discussion on that topic, and sparingly use source info/quotes to support your argument. Below are some quick questions that, when answered, will have you on the way to a quality, content-filled essay. These questions will help you blend parts of the source quote with your words, resulting in a paragraph that is your conversation, having found some source info to support your claim, rather than you defending a bunch of sources quotes.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. What is your main concept/point for this paragraph? (this paragraph should be one of your claim's reasons)
2. Have your own conversation on it (what you know about it)
3. Introduce the author/website as well as their ethos/credibility (what makes them the "expert"?)
4. What was the point of this article? (quick summary)
5. What was the most important thing that the author said?
6. Copy/paste the quote (then highlight the most important part(s) of it)
7. Re-write the above quote in your words, only keeping the important parts in their words (in "quotes")
8. Explain the 5b rewritten sentence –what does the author mean by his/her "quoted" words?
9. Relate this source info back to your thesis (interpret)

Question 1 is about your subject section's main point. You need to start the conversation by bringing up one of your reasons to your claim. When beginning to discuss this reason, you have a point, right? So start off your paragraph by telling readers your point (1).

Question 2 is about you starting your own discussion about this part of your claim. This can be a few sentences long, or even get into a second paragraph.

After you've made your point, and your conversation has begun, get into your source information (what your source says about this topic).



Question 3 is about you introducing your source and their credibility—establish their ethos.

Question 4 is about you discussing the main idea of this source, which a good place for a quick article summary.

After the article summary, is the hard part: blending the quote with your own words.

If you use question #5 on a separate piece of paper/document, you can create a sentence that has a blended quote used in support of your point. So, when you find your quote, copy/paste it (5a) to separate document and highlight the most important parts of the quote. Then (5b), you rewrite this sentence in using your own words, but keep those highlighted parts (in quotes).

Example: John Smith said sparkly blue glue was a ***waste of time***.

(rewritten) When discussing the use of sparkle glue, Smith indicated that it was a “waste of time” because no one can see it later (“Article Title”).

After you’ve completed a quote blend, then you can explain what the author/website meant by this statement (6). When you are done discussing all this information (feel free to repeat steps 5 and 6), then be sure to tell your reader how all this info supports your thesis. How does it relate to what you are claiming? Bring readers back to the point. Do not limit yourself to the typical 5 paragraph essay; this often results in incredibly long paragraphs, and/or awkward organization. This should help with over-all paragraph structure, and help fill your essay with non-fluffy stuff.