General Principles of Integrating Quotations

When integrating direct quotations into a paper it is important to move smoothly from the source information to your own thoughts. If quotations are simply dropped into a paper without significant warning, a reader may become confused as to the appropriateness and relevance of that particular quotation.

Therefore, it is necessary to introduce the quotation, usually with its author's name or the source from which it came, to give the reader adequate notice of the relevance and importance of the quotation. Here's a passage from an essay written to analyze five of Stephen Crane's short stories in relation to a uniting theme. The quotation lacks adequate introduction:

> The men in Stephen Crane's short story, "The Open Boat," are courageous; they want to live. "The idealistic virtues of bravery, fortitude, and integrity possess no meaning in a universe that denies the importance of man" (Stein 151). The ideals of their native environment, then, mean little when confronted with the harshness of the open ocean. These men finally realize that it is possible they will die.

While the writer addresses the importance of the quotation, this discussion comes after it is "dropped into the paper." A better use of this particular quotation follows:

> The men in Stephen Crane's short story, "The Open Boat," are courageous; they want to live. As critic William Bysshe Stein points out, however, "the idealistic virtues of bravery, fortitude, and integrity possess no meaning in a universe that denies the importance of man" (151). The ideals of their native environment, then, mean little when confronted with the harshness of the open ocean. These men finally realize that it is possible they will die.

In this passage, the quotation is well-introduced. The author of the quotation is identified, as is the quotation's relation to the previous statement. From the introduction, the reader can detect the contrast between the quotation and the first sentence of the paragraph.

Achieving Variety when Introducing Quotations

While it is necessary to introduce direct quotations in order to qualify them in relation to the rest of a paper, it is also necessary to introduce these quotations using a varied wording. It becomes monotonous if all the quotations in a paper are introduced with stock phrases: "this critic states" or "another critic says." A paper is much more interesting and cohesive if the introductory phrases, or "signal phrases," are varied.

Here are some possible signal phrases:

- According to Jane Doe, "..."
- As Jane Doe goes on to explain, "..."
- Characterized by John Doe, the society is "..."
- As one critic points out, "..."
- John Doe believes that "..."
- Jane Doe claims that "..."
- In the words of John Doe, "..."

Note that there exist fine shades of meaning between phrases such as "contend" and "argue" and large differences between ones such as "claim" and "demonstrate." Ask yourself questions as to whether the source material is making a claim, asserting a belief, stating a fact, etc. Then choose a verb that is appropriate for the source material's purpose.

A list of possible verbs for use in the introduction of quotations follows. Double-check meanings before using them!

acknowledges, adds, admits, affirms, agrees, argues, asserts, believes, claims, comments, compares, confirms, contends, declares, demonstrates, denies, disputes, emphasizes, endorses, grants, illustrates, implies, insists, notes, observes, points out, reasons, refutes, rejects, reports, responds, states, suggests, thinks, underlines, writes