Using outside information in essays builds the credibility of the writer. However, information cannot be dropped into a paper with just a citation. The reader needs to be introduced to the information, and the point needs to be explained.

The process for including outside information into your essay can be narrowed down to three steps:

1. Introduce
2. Cite
3. Explain

Step 1. Introducing Outside Information

All outside information should be introduced with signal phrases and reporting verbs that inform the reader on how to interpret the quote. Introducing outside information is important because inserting a quote without a transition can create confusion for your reader.

**Reporting Verbs**

When introducing outside information, you will use reporting verbs. Reporting verbs have various functions and strengths. If you are simply reporting a fact, use a neutral verb. If the author is making a clear argument, use a stronger verb. If the writer simply suggests something without making a strong argument for it, use a reporting verb that is in between neutral and strong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Semi-Neutral</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Imply</td>
<td>Argue</td>
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<td>Describe</td>
<td>Speculate</td>
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<td>State</td>
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<td>Refute</td>
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**Signal Phrases using Reporting Verbs**

- **Jody Fehr**, an expert in good taste, describes the problems with Bed Bath and Beyond in saying, “The aisles are stacked high with overpriced, low quality merchandise” (3).
- **Fehr argues that** “Temecula is not worth visiting” (19).
- **Suzanne Martinez** refutes Fehr’s claim when she asserts, “Temecula has many things to offer” (1).
- **Roxy Gonzalez** implies that she agrees with Fehr in saying, “Bed Bath and Beyond feels like a chaotic trip down the rabbit hole and into hoarder heaven” (23).
- **As Deanna Herrera has noted**, “Cereal is not really worth the trouble it takes to prepare” (6).
- **In her essay, Herrera also challenges the value of grapefruit knives:** ”No one needs a separate knife for every type of fruit” (9).
Step 2. Citing Outside Information

When you find an interesting sentence or idea in an outside source that will support your point, you may use it in one of two ways:

1. **Quoting** by taking a concept/idea word for word and enclosing it in quotation marks.
2. **Paraphrasing** by taking a concept or idea and putting it into your own words.

In both cases, you **must** give credit to the source of the idea/words to avoid unintentional plagiarism. You can do this by either mentioning the author in the signal phrase, OR including the author’s last name in the parenthetical with the page number the quote was found on.

### Quoting

In *History of Modern Art*, **Arnason** relates the painting to Carrington’s youth by stating that, “the enigmatic imagery that surrounds the artist in [this painting] is closely tied to Celtic mythology and memories of her childhood” (341).

OR

*History of Modern Art* explains, “the enigmatic imagery that surrounds the artist in [this painting] is closely tied to Celtic mythology and memories of her childhood” (**Arnason** 341), drawing a direct connection to Carrington’s youth.

As shown in the above example, you may need to change the grammar within a quote, correct an error, clarify vague language, or remove unnecessary information to illustrate your point in a more direct manner. For more information how to do this correctly, please refer to the Writing Center’s handout on **Punctuation for Quoted Material**.

### Paraphrasing

In *History of Modern Art*, **Arnason** highlights the personal nature of Carrington’s Self-Portrait by describing the artist’s use of Celtic imagery associated with her childhood (341).

OR

In *History of Modern Art*, the personal nature of Carrington’s Self-Portrait is explained by the artist’s use of Celtic imagery associated with her childhood (**Arnason** 341).

The format of citations will depend on the class subject **and** the professor's preference. The above examples follow the **MLA** (Modern Language Association) formatting guide for a book by one author.

For additional resources on how to properly cite other types of sources in **MLA**, **APA** (American Psychological Association), or **CMS** (Chicago Manual Style), please refer to Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/
Step 3. Explaining Outside Information

It is important to not only introduce and cite outside information in essays, but that you explain the significance of the information you have chosen to include as well. Don’t expect your reader to make the connection between the paper topic and the quote you have chosen to include! You must interpret the quote for your reader and explain to them how the quote relates to the main idea of your essay.

Don't be a hit-and-run quoter! Always stick around after quoting, and take the time to explain to the reader why the quote you chose is significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote Without an Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect</td>
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</table>
| In *Green Eggs and Ham*, Dr. Seuss tells an endearing story of two acquaintances discussing their breakfast options. It can be deduced that one of the characters is reluctant to consume the suggested breakfast as he proclaims, “I would not like them here or there. I would not like them anywhere. I do not like green eggs and ham. I

An explanation shows readers how to interpret the selected quote. Without an explanation readers may assume that the character you have quoted is picky about the location he eats his breakfast.

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| In *Green Eggs and Ham*, Dr. Seuss tells an endearing story of two acquaintances discussing their breakfast options. It can be deduced that one of the characters is reluctant to consume the suggested breakfast as he proclaims, “I would not like them here or there. I would not like them anywhere. I do not like green eggs and ham. I do not like them!” (3). His aversion is exceedingly clear, and it is seen that his dislike is truly for the food itself and not the location of the breakfast.

When a quote is followed with a clear explanation on how readers should interpret it, there is less possibility of confusion. The example above makes it clear to the readers that the character quoted dislikes the food itself and not where he eats it.

**Review**

In order to successfully integrate an outside source into your paper, you must:

1. Introduce your quote by using signal phrases and reporting verbs.
2. Cite your source by directly quoting or paraphrasing to avoid unintentional plagiarism.
3. Explain your quote to show how it supports your thesis and to avoid misinterpretation.