**Introducing, Citing, and Explaining Quotations in MLA**

Quoting involves presenting the exact wording of a text, with quotation marks enclosing the material used. Citation information in the body of the paper is enclosed in parentheses ( ) and referred to as in-text citations. Acknowledging the source of the quoted material with proper citations is essential.

**Quotations cannot stand on their own. It is necessary to ICE them: Introduce, Cite, and Explain**.

**I**ntroduce the author and/or quotation, so there are words before the quotation in the sentence.

**C**ite the quotation, using the author’s name and page numbers, when available.

**E**xplain how the quotation relates to and/or supports your idea.

**1. Examples of quotations that are introduced incorrectly and correctly.**

**Incorrect quotation, not introduced:**

Writing a research paper is a difficult process but not without its benefits. “When you have a research paper to write, the task may seem overwhelming and perhaps confusing, but completing a research paper is an excellent way to sharpen skills you already have” (Harris 325).

Although there is a sentence before the quotation, it is necessary to **introduce the quotation**, **in the**

**same sentence** in which it appears.

**Correct quotation, introduced:**

Writing a research paper is a difficult process but not without its benefits. **According to Muriel Harris, an expert in the field of college writing,** “When you have a research paper to write, the task may seem overwhelming and perhaps confusing, but completing a research paper is an excellent way to sharpen skills you already have” (325).

**Since the author’s name (X) appears in the sentence, only page numbers are required in the parentheses. Example phrases for introducing quotations:**

* X asserts, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” (2).
* As the prominent scholar X suggests, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” (5).
* According to X, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” (27).
* In her article, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, X maintains, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” (4).
* X writes, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” (7).

**2. Quotations must be cited, giving appropriate credit to sources.**

The author’s first and last name appear the first time s/he is mentioned in a sentence, with the last name only used thereafter. In the in-text citation, the last name only appears along with page numbers, when available (see the bullets above).

**3. In addition to introducing and citing quotations, it is necessary to explain how they are relevant**

**to your point. Example:**

Writing a research paper is a difficult process but not without its benefits. According to Muriel Harris, an expert in the field of college writing, “When you have a research paper to write, the task may seem overwhelming and perhaps confusing, but completing a research paper is an excellent way to sharpen skills you already have” (325). **The essence of Harris’s argument acknowledges that research writing is challenging but asserts that the resulting growth is worth the effort.**

**Examples phrases for explaining quotations:**

* In making this comment, X argues that…
* X emphasizes that…
* X’s point is that…
* The essence of X’s argument is that…

Works Cited

Graff, G. & Birkenstein, C. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York:

W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Harris, R. *The Plagiarism Handbook*. Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing, 2001.