

# When Should I Cite? *MLA Handout #1*

- ALL direct quotations MUST be cited with quotation marks (unless indented).
- Borrowed ideas MUST be cited.
- Ideas or facts that are NOT common knowledge MUST be cited.
- Summaries and paraphrases MUST be cited.
- Specific information like statistics, charts, graphs, diagrams, and controversial findings MUST be cited.
- When paraphrasing or summarizing, AVOID borrowing words or mimicking sentence structure and word order.
- Always use your own words.
- Try to paraphrase or summarize from the memory of a reading instead of directly from a source so as to AVOID repeating words or a pattern.
- If in doubt, cite a source.

## **Common Knowledge**

In general, if you have seen certain facts often during your reading and research (Michelangelo's birthdate, or Leonardo's mother's name) you DO NOT have to cite them. However, if the information is at all controversial or if you are in doubt, cite a source. Statistics should be cited. For example,

The Coca-Cola company uses a tremendous amount of water for bottling soft drinks. (no citation)

or

The Coca-Cola company uses 290 billion litres of water annually (Reuters).

## **Integrating Quotations Smoothly**

One method is to introduce the reader to the author as a means of beginning a quotation.

Example:

According to Hans Bertens, a noted theorist, "postmodernism would actively seem to follow - be it at a certain distance - the utopian strain in contemporary culture, attaching itself to new utopias as these are formulated" (13).

or

A noted theorist, Hans Bertens, acknowledged that, "postmodernism would actively seem to follow - be it at a certain distance - the utopian strain in contemporary culture, attaching itself to new utopias as these are formulated" (13).

It is also useful to let your reader know how *you* are reading the quote - whether it supports your argument, whether you disagree with it, or how it relates to your other sources. Use a quote as proof of what you are saying.

Example:

Although many critics see postmodernism as a cynical departure from the modernist pursuit of purity, Bertens asserts that "postmodernism would actively seem to follow - be it at a certain distance - the utopian strain in contemporary culture, attaching itself to new utopias as these are formulated" (13).

This list of verbs might help you to integrate quotations through the introduction of the author or of the source:

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

*This verb list was taken from Diana Hacker's A Writer's Reference, p218.*