IMPROVING QUOTING SKILLS I

PURPOSE OF DLA

This DLA is designed to help you learn ten basic rules of quoting nonfiction material. It is the first and easiest of three about quoting. Read the rules presented below, and then do the activity on the last page. While you are only required to print the last two pages, if you find the information helpful, it might be wise to print the first three pages.

THE BASIC ANATOMY OF A QUOTE

speaker credentials a comma goes here

According to Sara Mendoza, professor of biology at Stanford, “Cloning humans may offer some benefits, but overall it could cause more problems” (10). ← period goes here

quote page # (unless a website source)

Rule # 1: Do not quote simply to quote or fill up your essay. A quote should be used only if it is striking or because the idea is too complicated to paraphrase.

Rule #2: All direct and indirect quotes need a name/attribution tag in the sentence. Readers should always know who is talking and who the speaker is. A direct quote is word-for-word from the speaker. An indirect quote is another person’s idea put into your own words and sentence construction.

Direct quote:

According to Sara Mendoza, professor of biology at Stanford, “Cloning humans may offer some benefits, but overall it could cause more problems; therefore, it should not be attempted” (10).

Indirect quote:

Sara Mendoza, professor of biology at Stanford, believes that since the potential drawbacks of human cloning outweigh possible benefits, it should not be done (10).

All speakers need to be fully identified the first time they are used, whether directly or indirectly quoted. Follow the Mendoza examples above. Once you identify a speaker by full name and credentials, you refer to that person by last name ever after. Do not use Mr. or Mrs. titles.

You can put the name tag at the beginning or end of the quotation. If there is a clause or two independent clauses, you can also put the name tag in the middle. Name tag verbs should be in the present tense: asks, says, argues.

Thoreau asks his readers, “Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government?” (18).

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Rule #3: Use a colon when you introduce a quotation with a full sentence.

In his essay “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King, Jr. makes a statement that has not lost its relevance: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” (343).

Rule #4: When you use the word that to set up a quotation, do not use a comma.

While Mendoza believes cloning could help in some instances, she feels that “overall it could cause more problems” (10).

Rule #5: You must quote exactly—word for word and punctuation mark for punctuation mark. Either you quote exactly or you rewrite completely (and cite the source). Even if the original source has a spelling error, you cannot change it, but you must let your readers know that it was not your mistake by using [sic].

“I believe [sic] that cloning animals that are going extinct makes sense,” says bioethicist Kim Yamada in her 2010 online article “To Clone or Not to Clone.”

When you would like to use a quote but not the whole quote use the ellipsis. These three spaced periods tell your readers that you took out some information in the quote. However, the quote must remain grammatically correct and in context; you may not use the ellipsis to change the meaning of the quote. If you skip a whole sentence or more, add a fourth period to the ellipsis to signify this.

Original

Mendoza points out that “Cloning is a good idea for certain uses like saving endangered species, for organ replacement, and for the study of aging, but this knowledge could easily be misused” (10).

With ellipsis

Mendoza points out that “Cloning is a good idea for certain uses . . . , but this knowledge could easily be misused” (10).

Rule #6: Keep in mind that readers do not have the original source to look at, so if a word or term would be unclear to them, clarify it in the quote. Use brackets [      ] to insert a word or words to clarify a direct quote.

“Too often they [doctors] want to play God and do not think of the consequences,” believes bioethicist Arthur Caplan (15).

Rule #7: Use the abbreviation qtd. in to indicate that you are quoting from an indirect source. In other words, you are using someone else’s report of a conversation, statement, interview, letter, or whatever. The person speaking is not the writer of the source.

Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, says, “I really had a lot of dreams when I was a kid, and I think a great deal of that grew out of the fact that I had a chance to read a lot” (qtd. in Brown 23).

Rule #8: If you want to quote something that has quotation marks in it, use the half quotes.

“My favorite poem is ‘Stop All the Clocks’ by W.H. Auden,” Claire tells Miguel (13).
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Direct Learning Activity M.3

Rule #9: Website sources do not have page numbers. If you identify the speaker as the writer, there is no need for a citation.

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Rule #10: Quotes over four typed lines must be blocked (indent ten spaces, omit quotation marks, put the final period after the citation). Some instructors do not like block quotations, so consult your instructor before using one.
**STEP 1:** Using the information you just read about quoting, do the following activity. Which sentence in the following pairs demonstrates correct quoting? Put an X in the space to indicate the correct one. Also indicate rule contains the answer.

A. _____ “While earning a college degree is not easy, the hard work will pay off in more financial security over a person’s lifetime” (Garcia 12).

B. _____ According to Ed Garcia, professor of economics at Harvard University, “While earning a college degree is not easy, the hard work will pay off in more financial security over a person’s lifetime” (12).

Rule # _____

A. _____ Mark Twain offers good advice to writers: “Substitute ‘damn’ every time you’re inclined to write ‘very’; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be” (23).

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Rule # _____

A. _____ Senator Inouye continues by explaining that “we also must consider how social networking sites have exacerbated the problem of bullying” (26).

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Rule # _____

A. _____ Discovering what career is right for you is not always easy to figure out. Khaled Khan, career counselor, explained, “People change careers on average four times during their life, so you might have several interests that can be competing with each other.”

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Rule # _____

A. _____ Speaking at a memorial service for the victims of the Tucson, Arizona, shooting, President Obama made a good point about what this tragedy could teach us: “We may not be able to stop
all the evil in the world, but I know how we treat one another is entirely up to us” (qtd. in Mendoza).

B. ____

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Rule # _____

**OPTIONAL:** Feel free to write here any questions you have about quoting that you would like to ask the WRC instructor. Feel free to also bring an essay you are working on to ask questions about your own use of quotations.

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

**STEP 2:** Take your finished activity to a WRC instructor on duty, go over your answers, and make whatever changes are necessary. Ask the instructor to fill in the section below.

_________________________________________  ___________________________________  ______

instructor’s name  instructor’s signature  date