IMPROVING QUOTING SKILLS II

PURPOSE OF DLA

This DLA is designed to help you learn ten basic rules of quoting nonfiction material. It is the second 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 page, 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Rule #1: Do not quote simply to quote or fill up your essay.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).
Rule #9: Website sources do not have page numbers. If you identify the speaker as the writer, there is no need for a citation.

“I beleive [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.”

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.
**Direct Learning Activity M.4**

**IMPROVING QUOTING SKILLS II**

**STEP 1:** Read the brief article below, and answer the questions that follow. Feel free to highlight the article.

“Writing about Fears Helps Teens with Stress”

Psychologists at the University of Chicago have discovered a quick and easy way for stressed-out students to avoid choking on a high-stakes test: Take a few minutes right before the exam to write about all those fears. A study published online Thursday by the journal *Science* found that anxious students given ten minutes to put their feelings down on paper performed significantly better than their peers who wrote about other topics or did nothing at all.

The idea that there are simple steps to improve test scores — outside, say, private tutors or SAT prep courses — is sure to be welcome news for students, parents and educators who have long struggled to get students to perform their best on midterms, finals and college entrance exams. “You don’t have to wield these expensive or time-consuming tools,” said psychology professor Sian L. Beilock, who conducted the study with graduate student Gerardo Ramirez.

“Writing about emotional events has been shown to reduce rumination — which is when people devote mental energy to revisiting distressing ideas — in the clinically depressed,” Beilock said. Perhaps writing about one’s emotions before an exam frees up that brain power for the task at hand.

The pair performed a series of experiments to test their hypothesis. First, they asked twenty college students to take a math test just to get a base-line score, and simply told them to do their best. Next, to raise the stakes, they told the students that they could receive a monetary award if they got a good grade — and that they were being videotaped. Before beginning the main test, the researchers asked one group of students to spend ten minutes writing down their feelings about the test, and the other group sat quietly for that time. Everyone then took the same exam. The researchers found that students who sat quietly did 12 percent worse than they had on the pretest, and the ones who wrote about their anxieties improved their scores by 5 percent.

**STEP 2:** Using the information you just read about quoting rules, indicate whether the material taken from the article is quoted correctly or not. If the quotation is correct, write C. If the quotation has an error, write E, and either fix the error or write a brief explanation of the error. As rule #2 indicates, a speaker only needs to be fully identified the first time he or she is quoted.

1. ____ In her article explaining recent study results about students and stress, reporter Amina Khan says, “The idea that there are simple steps to improve test scores . . . is sure to be welcome news for students, parents and educators who have long struggled to get students to perform their best on midterms, finals and college entrance exams” (A13).

2. ____ Khan explains how the 2011 study discovered that, “anxious students given ten minutes to put their feelings down on paper performed significantly better than their peers who wrote about other topics or did nothing at all” (A13).

3. ____ According to Sian L. Beilock, psychology professor and co-conductor of the study, expensive study aids like tutoring or prep courses are not always necessary. She argues, “You don’t have to wield these expensive or time-consuming tools” (qtd. in Khan A13).
4. ____ Perhaps writing about one’s emotions before an exam frees up that brain power for the task at hand (A13).

5. ____ “The researchers found that students who sat quietly did 12 percent worse than they had on the pretest,” explains Khan, “and the ones who wrote about their anxieties improved their scores by 5 percent. (A13)”

**STEP 3:** Write down any questions you have about quoting and citing that you would like to ask a WRC instructor on duty. Feel free to also bring an essay you are working on to ask questions about your own use of quotations.

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**STEP 4:** 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