

## WRITING HISTORY: USING SOURCES AND QUOTES

This packet will explain ways to include quotes and evidence from sources in your essays; it will also provide some examples of both correct and incorrect methods. This packet will help you to integrate direct quotes into your writing and will help you learn to paraphrase clearly and effectively. However, whether you use direct quotes or paraphrases, you must *always* use parenthetical citations to inform the reader of your sources. You need to give your source for quotations, statistics, the opinions and interpretations of others, and facts that are not common knowledge. Effective use of quotations, paraphrasing, and correct source citation are not solely important to writing history; they are also essential to this high school's expectations that its graduates be able to access and analyze critical information as well as communicate effectively.

### DIRECT QUOTES

When using direct quotes, (1) be sure to include the quote within a sentence of your own or introduce it with a sentence or phrase of your own, and (2) make clear which words are yours and which come from someone else.

#### **UNACCEPTABLE:**

The early explorers should be celebrated because they achieved incredible things. "The explorers of the fifteenth century and early sixteenth centuries did not set out to make a revolution in knowledge, but that is what they achieved. The Portuguese not only ended the isolation of Europe; they also set it on the path to worldwide expansion."

#### **CORRECT:**

The early explorers, especially the Portuguese, deserve to be renowned and have their achievements celebrated today because they started a "revolution in knowledge" and also set Western civilization toward a "path to worldwide expansion" (Document 4). Diaz, da Gama, and Magellan all deserve recognition for their part in leading Europe out of the Middle Ages.

Whenever a quote or evidence is presented, not only do you need to introduce it but you also need to explain why you have included it.

#### **UNACCEPTABLE:**

The examples of European selfishness and exploitation of Native Americans are further evidence that early European explorers and settlers do not deserve to be celebrated in modern times. They "forced the Indians to farm the land or work in mines" (Document 6). This caused many Indians to die from "overwork and harsh treatment" (Document 6). This was called the encomienda system.

#### **CORRECT**

The encomienda system of Native American labor is further evidence that early European explorers and settlers do not deserve to be celebrated in modern times. As part of this system, European settlers "forced the Indians to farm the land or work in mines" which led to thousands of Indians to die from "overwork and harsh treatment" (Document 6). Greed, cruelty, and exploitation are not qualities that should be glorified.

## IDENTIFYING TAGS

Whenever possible, include an identifying tag to introduce or conclude a quotation. An identifying tag is a phrase that identifies the source of the quote. NEVER use an identifying tag that reads “As Document 1 states” or “According to Document 1.” The source should be a person, the specific title of a work, or possibly both. If Document 1 will be your source (because it’s a class handout with an informal title), don’t use an identifying tag but put the source in parentheses.

### UNACCEPTABLE:

The Spanish conquistadors were very important in establishing Western civilization and Christianity in the Americas. According to Document 2, “No year passes in which they do not kill and sacrifice 50 souls at each temple in their kingdom... I did everything I could to steer them away from their false gods and to draw them to our Lord God.” Human sacrifice is no longer practiced by Native Americans.

### CORRECT:

The explorers and conquerors from Spain were important in regard to the expansion of both Western civilization and Christianity. Hernan Cortes, in his letter to Charles V, described his encounter with the Aztecs, “I did everything I could to steer them away from their false gods and to draw them to our Lord God ... Therefore, I removed the statues of the false gods, cleaned the temples, and taught the people our religion” (Document 2). The Aztecs and other natives adopted Western ideas and customs either voluntarily or through force when necessary.

The following verbs may be used instead of “said” or “stated” to add variety to your sentences, but make sure the word is appropriate to your meaning. You will often have to change the verb from the **PRESENT** to the **PAST** tense when writing for history classes.

*agrees*

*explains*

*notes*

*believes*

*finds*

*observes*

*claims*

*illustrates*

*reports*

*comments*

*indicates*

*suggests*

*concludes*

*insists*

*summarizes*

## PARAPHRASING

When you paraphrase, you give the essence and details of someone else’s ideas and evidence in your own words and language. Most of your work should be in your own words, so you will probably paraphrase more than you quote. Even when you paraphrase, cite your source!

### AVOIDABLE:

Native Americans benefitted greatly from European discovery and colonization. Indians were taught “how to read and write, and to compose books ... breed cattle of all sorts, and break in oxen, and plough the land, and sow wheat, and thresh harvest, and sell it, and make bread, and they have planted their lands with all the trees and fruits” (Document 1).

### PREFERABLE:

Native Americans benefitted greatly from European discovery and colonization. Bernal Diaz described how Indians became literate in Spanish, raised domesticated animals, improved agriculture, and produced new European crops and foods (Document 1). This was necessary for natives to recover from widespread disease and be an important part of colonial society.

Be sure to give the source you paraphrase before continuing on with your own interpretation or more facts and always make clear what material in a paragraph comes from a source and what is your own interpretation. Use identifying tags and provide parenthetical sources.

When you paraphrase, you must still be detailed. To have paraphrased the previous example by saying “These benefits included books, animals, and food” would not have been acceptable.

Sometimes there is no way to quote your source, because the information is provided in maps, charts, graphs, and illustrations. In this case, you need to explain what you are seeing and provide the interpretation. When you cite evidence from such sources, don’t be vague: the evidence should be detailed and relevant to your arguments.

**UNACCEPTABLE:**

The European explorers, settlers, and especially, the Spanish conquistadors should not be glorified by modern society because their actions had a devastating impact on the populations of Native Americans like the millions of Aztecs that died (Document 5).

**CORRECT:**

The destruction of Native American civilization and populations during the Age of Exploration shows that the Europeans explorers and conquerors should not be glorified in present times. For instance, the combined population of the Aztec and Incan empires was about 40 million in 1500 and within the next century plummeted to about 5 million people as a result of contact with European explorers and settlers (Document 6). This massive and tragic loss of human life is cause enough to stop celebrations like Columbus Day.

### **PLAGIARISM**

If you intentionally use someone else’s work and claim that it is your own, you are guilty of the worst form of plagiarism, and consequences will be official and serious. This is the most serious offense in the academic world—high school or college.

The examples here are going to focus on avoiding *unintentional plagiarism*. Unintentional plagiarism is a result of not paying attention to documentation rules—which are the rules of using evidence and citing your sources. If you fail to put quotation marks around material you have copied from a source, even if you cite the source, you have committed plagiarism. If your paraphrase contains too many words from the original, that is also plagiarism.

**ORIGINAL:**

“Whenever they ask anything of their gods, in order for their request to be fulfilled, they take many boys, girls, men, and women, and in the presence of the statues of their gods they cut open their chests. While they are still alive they take out their hearts and entrails. Then they burn the organs, offering the smoke as a sacrifice to their gods...”

**UNACCEPTABLE:**

When the native peoples wanted anything from their gods they had to make sacrifices in order for their wishes to come true. Many boys, girls, men, and women would have their heart and entrails cut out of their chests in front of religious statues. Then, a sacrifice would be made in the form of burning the organs to give the smoke to the gods (Document 2).

**CORRECT:**

In his letters to Charles V, Hernan Cortes wrote about some of the religious practices of the Aztecs which he considered to be “horrible, and abominable, and deserving punishment.” Cortes described to Charles V various rituals that involved human sacrifice of both adults and children, intended as offerings to the gods of the Aztecs (Document 2).

If you employ the “technique” of copying passages from the textbook to answer the questions from your homework, you are more likely to copy words from a source rather than paraphrase them. Be aware of this.

As stated previously, some things must *always* be cited whether they are in your own words or not—interpretations made by others, statistics that are not common knowledge, original research done by others.

The following example shows how to take an important passage from a source and use both paraphrasing and direct quotation to help support an argument and position.

**ORIGINAL:**

“[The plague] began to spread during [the month of October] and lasted for seventy days, striking everywhere in the city and killing a vast number of people. Sores erupted on our faces, our breasts, our bellies; we were covered with agonizing sores from head to foot.”

**UNACCEPTABLE:**

Even after the Spaniards left the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlan, the negative effects of the Europeans continued to destroy the population. A terrible sickness, which lasted more than two months, killed a great number of Indians. According to the Aztecs, sores erupted on their faces, breasts and bellies. One Aztec is recorded as saying that the people were covered with painful sores from head to foot (Document 5).

**CORRECT:**

The role that the Spanish played in the destruction of the Aztec population is tremendous. Not only were Aztecs killed violently in defense of Tenochtitlan, but the Aztecs were also killed off through the spread of a European disease. According to Portilla’s *The Broken Spears*, plague broke out in the Aztec city sometime in early October, and continued through November. Portilla included an account of an Aztec who described their condition, recounting that “sores erupted on our faces, our breasts, our bellies; we were covered with agonizing sores from head to foot” (Document 5). Cortes and other conquistadors then took advantage of the weakened health of the natives to claim most of Central and South America for Spain and then become wealthy from land stolen from the peoples they conquered.

***Some of these guidelines were adopted from the 3<sup>d</sup> ed. of The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook by Laurie Kirszner and Stephen Mandell.***