QUOTATIONS

Quotations are an essential part of academic writing. It is important to know how to synthesize them into your paper correctly. When considering a quotation, ask yourself the following questions:

**Does it support my argument and thesis statement?**
This may seem like a simple question, but it is vital. Whenever you use a quotation, be sure that it supports your position. You can also quote a statement that supports the other side of the argument, but make sure to explain why it is an invalid argument, or offer a solution that strengthens your position.

**Does it contain unnecessary information?**
You may find a great quotation that strengthens your argument, but it is simply too long. Perhaps it has some information in the middle that doesn’t apply to your point or position. Use the ellipsis mark ( . . . ) to eliminate that information, as in the following example:

*Original quotation (from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address): “It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom—and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”*

*Shortened version:* “it is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us. . . that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

**Do I need to insert my own words?**
There will be times when you need to adjust a quote to improve its grammar flow or to include extra information. In this case, use brackets ([ ]). See the following example:

*Original quotation:* “I had no idea where to begin, but my professors were very understanding.”

*Adaptation to fit in the sentence:* Justin, a new college student, explained that he “had no idea where to begin, but [his] professors were very understanding.”

Important: Always preserve the original’s author’s meaning. If you use an ellipsis mark, make sure that you do not change the intended meaning.