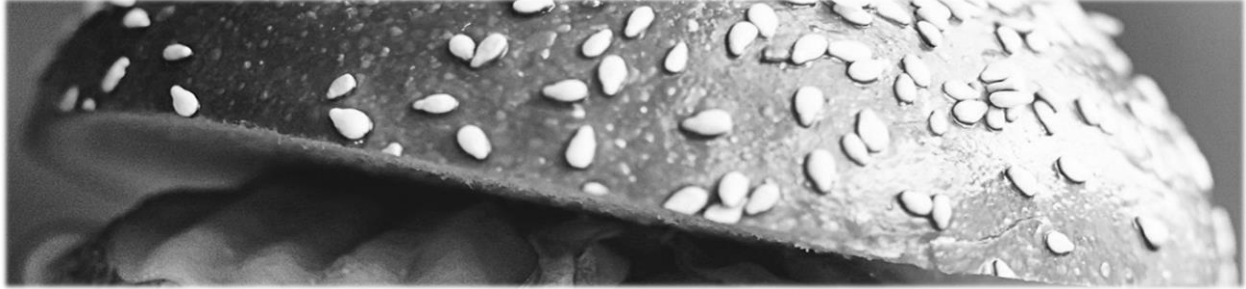


# The MLA Quotation Burger

Using quotes in your MLA paper helps support the points you are making, but if you don't set up a quote properly, it can confuse your audience. Your readers need to move from your words to the words of a source without feeling a jolt. One helpful analogy is a hamburger.

## The Top Bun\*

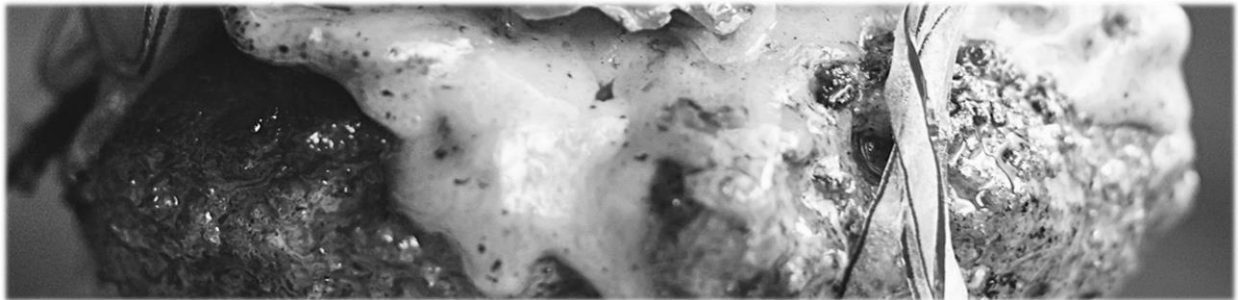


**Use a signal phrase.** A signal phrase prepares your readers for what is coming. Here are some phrases for introducing quotations:

X writes, “. . .” (208).  
X believes, “. . .” (37).  
X says, “. . .” (3).  
According to X, “. . .” (20).

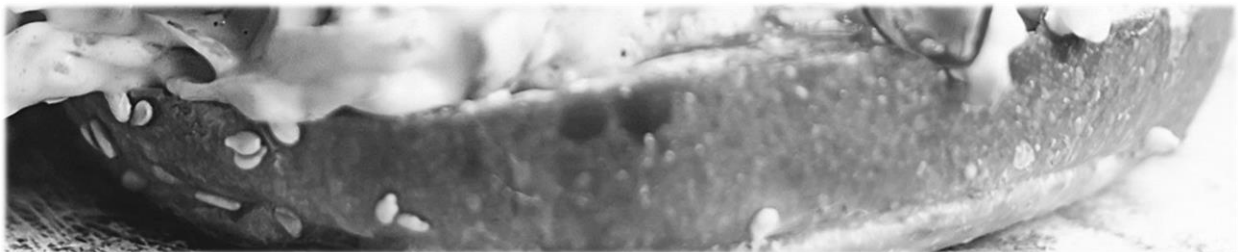
In X's view, “. . .” (9).  
X explains, “. . .” (7).  
X states, “. . .” (11).  
X argues, “. . .” (56).

## The Meat\*



**The meat is the quote itself.** Choose words and phrases that help support your ideas. Be sure to *quote the words exactly!*

## The Bottom Bun\*



You need to tell your reader *why* and/or *how* this *quote connects* to the point you are making in your paper and/or in the paragraph. Here are some sample phrases for explaining quotations:

X is saying that . . .  
In other words, X believes . . .  
This passage reveals . . .

These words suggest . . .  
X's point is that . . .  
X's words show why . . .

## Examples of Signal Phrase Verbs\* (MLA calls for present or present perfect tense)

acknowledges	rejects	maintains
comments	agrees	suggests
endorses	contends	believes
points out	implies	disputes
adds	reports	notes
compares	argues	thinks
grants	declares	claims
reasons	insists	emphasizes
admits	responds	observes
confirms	asserts	<b>writes</b>
illustrates	denies	

## Examples of the Quotation Burger

Caesar Chavez insists, “Students must have initiative; they should not be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves” (23). These words remind us that educators who want to empower and liberate students must teach them *how* to think, not merely *what* to think.

Pop star Chappell Roan states, “Drag is like a spa for my soul.” In this, she testifies to the restorative nature of expressing one’s identity, especially as a part of a community in which one feels they belong.

In the words of Langston Hughes, “Writing is like traveling. It's wonderful to go somewhere, but you get tired of staying” (55). Indeed, the creative process is, for many, marked by fervent delight over any new idea, a brilliant feeling that lasts only until the next one begins itching at the brain. Many writers are carried through their careers by this is mental wanderlust.

\*Sections adapted with changes from the following:

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. W. W. Norton, 2006.

Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer’s Reference*. 8th ed., Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016.

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