Quoting effectively

General guidelines

1. Quote sparingly. Quotations should not take over your paper; often, you can summarize or paraphrase your sources.

2. Quote accurately. If you drop words from a quotation, indicate the omissions with an ellipsis; if you alter a quotation to make it fit your sentence grammatically, use brackets.

   The problem stems from lack of resources: "Many high schools . . . are unable to provide adequate computer facilities" (Smith 43).

   Smith learned, "to [his] astonishment, [that] only 5% of high schools [had] adequate computer labs" (45).

3. Provide context for your quotations. Instead of dropping a quotation into your writing without warning, set up the quotation with, as appropriate, indicators of who or where it comes from and why you are quoting it.

   As Smith points out in Big Book, "Frequently, students need practice quoting sources" (35).

   After her conversation in the garden with Mr. Protagonist, Effie Heroine describes herself as "without hope, but without illusion" (878).

4. Integrate quotations smoothly and grammatically into your sentences.

   You can use a verb of speaking or thinking plus a comma or that.

   Jones observes, "Quoting can be fun, once you know how" (698).

   Jones, rather fanatically, considers that "quoting well is living well" (801).

   You can work single words and short phrases into your own sentences.

   In general, students' initial "fear and panic" (Jones 65) over documentation subsides after instruction and practice with it.

   As a student learning to handle sources, Jones experienced "the heady rush of competence" (23) that learning how to quote can give.

   You can use a complete introductory statement plus a colon.

   Smith points out the increasing complexity of documentation: "With the growth of technology, particularly the Internet, we are faced not only with more sources, but with more kinds of sources" (455).

Further help

Backing it Up: Making Good Use of Sources in Your Writing (Writing Centre, UCFV)  
<http://www.ucfv.bc.ca/writing_centre/QUOTING.htm>

Academic Writing: Using Literary Quotation (Writing Centre, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison)  
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QuoLiterature.html>