

## Research: Using and “Marshalling” Source Information

**Stay in control of the information you bring in from outside.** March it in under your command! Keep it in line! Tell it where to stand! Make it identify itself! This is called “marshalling” your support: you subordinate it to your thesis. You direct it and manage it. The message belongs to you.

If all you do is paste in quotes and add some comments, you’re letting your sources write your paper and your reader suspects you really have nothing to say. Most of your essay should be your own discussion of the topic, promoting your own understanding and your own opinion. Bring in ideas from your sources only as needed for support, or as starting points for your further discussion.

**Use direct quotation no more than necessary.** If you want to remark on the author’s actual language, then “quote her exact words,” but if all you need is the idea, paraphrase or summarize it so you can get on with your own discussion, your own message. Examples:

- **Not good:** Romeo wakes to find he is still in Juliet’s room. He says “Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund day / Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops” (III.v.9-10). That means it’s already daylight. He tells Juliet he’d better go or they’ll find him there and kill him.
  - ▶ **Never introduce a quote just to explain what it says. That insults your reader.**
- **Good:** Even when Romeo wakes to find he is still in Juliet’s room at daylight (III.v.1-11), the lovers are so wrapped in the charm of the moment that they almost ignore the danger.
  - ▶ **This writer wanted to interpret the action, not comment on the language.**
- **Good:** Even when Romeo wakes to find he is still in Juliet’s room at daylight when “Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund day / Stands tip-toe on the misty mountaintops” (III.v.9-10), you can tell by the sleepy, happy tone of Romeo’s metaphor that the lovers are still wrapped in the charm of the moment and they almost ignore the danger.
  - ▶ **This direct quotation is justified by the remark on the speaker’s tone and style.**

**Distinguish your own thoughts from those of your sources.** You will mix them in the same paragraph, so you must use transitions and other cues to alert your reader. “Bracket” your **source’s ideas** to set them apart. Of course, “quotation marks” and a **parenthetical citation** always work for exact quotes, but for paraphrase, use a **text citation or disclaimer** on one end and a **parenthetical citation** on the other. Keep your own ideas outside the “bracket.” Good examples and options:

[Complete paraphrase, bracketed with a text citation and parenthetical citation:]

...Actors face a challenge when they have to play Falstaff because he’s so much smarter and wittier than all the rest of the characters, but at the same time the most profound and serious. ← me

**Shakespeare critic Harold C. Goddard believes only Falstaff and real children can express the buoyancy of spirit to overcome the ponderousness of Falstaff’s bulky body on the stage (179).** ← Goddard  
A modern performance that perhaps meets this challenge is that of Orson Welles in his adaptation, *Chimes at Midnight*.... ← me

[Paraphrase-quote mix, bracketed with a disclaimer and parenthetical citation:]

**One critic wrote that it would require either a child or “Falstaff himself to act Falstaff” (Goddard 179).**

[Complete quote, letting the quotation marks bracket the borrowed material:]

A problem with live performance is that “[i]t would take Falstaff himself to act Falstaff” (Goddard 179).

[Complete quote, bracketed with a text citation and parenthetical citation:]

**Goddard remarked that “[i]t would take a child to melt this too too solid flesh into spirit. It would take Falstaff himself to act Falstaff” (179).**

### Works Cited

*Chimes at Midnight*. Dir. Orson Welles. Perf. Orson Welles, John Gielgud.

Continental Film Distributors, 1965. DVD.

Goddard, Harold C. *The Meaning of Shakespeare, Vol. 1*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1951. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare-online.com. *Shakespeare Online*. 18 May 2014. Web. 13 August 2014.