

Working with Sources Workshop

1. Use a signal phrase with the author's name to introduce a quotation from this text and then cite according to MLA.

- According to Walker Percy, it "is almost impossible to gaze directly at the Grand Canyon" (47).

2. Use a signal phrase *without* the author's name to introduce a quotation and then cite according to MLA.

- But the Grand Canyon is "no longer the thing as it confronted the Spaniard; it is rather that which has already been formulated—by picture postcard, geography book, tourist folders, and the words Grand Canyon" (Percy 47).

3. Use a signal phrase with the author's name, *summarize* this entire passage in your own words, and then cite according to MLA. Use no quotations. *Think carefully about your audience: if they have not read this piece, how should you write this so that they will understand?*

- Walker Percy argues that it is now extraordinarily difficult to see the Grand Canyon in an original way because of our prior exposure to images and descriptions of the place (47).

4. Paraphrase this entire passage in your own words without using the author's name and then cite according to MLA. Briefly quote language or terms to give the reader a sense of the "flavor" of Percy's paragraph. *Think carefully about your audience: if they have not read this piece, how should you write this so that they will understand?*

- The argument in "The Loss of the Creature" is that it is "almost impossible" to see the Grand Canyon as we might view an unfamiliar object we discover lying on the ground. When we attempt to view the Canyon, we bring with us in our minds a

vast trove of information and imagery about the place—a “symbolic complex” that alters and obscures our perceptions. While the Canyon's original discoverer¹ saw the site without any preconceptions or “preformulation,” our experience of the place is always conditioned by the expectations we possess and how well the site “conforms” to them (Percy 47).

5. Quote from this passage using the MLA block quote format, then cite according to MLA.

Walker Percy argues that the Grand Canyon is no longer visible or knowable due to our previous “experience” with it through the consumption of media:

[T]he Grand Canyon, the thing as it is, has been appropriated by the symbolic complex which has already been formed in the sightseer’s mind. Seeing the canyon under approved circumstances is seeing the symbolic complex head on. The thing is no longer the thing as it confronted the Spaniard; it is rather that which has already been formulated—by picture postcard, geography book, tourist folders, and the words Grand Canyon. As a result of this preformulation, the source of the sightseer’s pleasure undergoes a shift. Where the wonder and delight of the Spaniard arose from his penetration of the thing itself, from a progressive discovery of depths, patterns, colors, shadows, etc., now the sightseer measures his satisfaction by the degree to which the canyon conforms to the preformed complex. (47)

¹ The first discoverer of the Grand Canyon was emphatically *not* a Spaniard.