Shortening Quotations

Why shorten quotations?

The papers in this class are not long enough to warrant the use of a block quotation—that is, a quotation that is more than three lines on your page. Thus, in order to include all relevant information, it is useful to shorten long quotations by combining summary and snippets of the quote.

Original quote:

According to Watson, "To continue in the way we are—relying on hospices and specialist care—isn't an option. It is really important to democratize specialist knowledge. We need to engage carers, voluntary groups, nursing homes and patients themselves so they can be empowered to provide good-quality end-of-life care. Most of those helping are over 60 themselves. They are a fantastic resource we are not using properly" (Laverne).

Quote shortened by combining summary and snippets:

Rather than persist with current practices in palliative care, Watson suggests "democratiz[ing] specialist knowledge. We need to engage carers," he asserts, as "nursing homes and patients themselves […] are a fantastic resource we are not using properly" (Lavern).

Use of Brackets

Note the use of brackets in the shortened version of the quote. When quoting from material, use brackets to indicate minor changes/alterations you make to the quotation in question. For example, if the original quote uses past tense and you want to integrate that quote into your present tense paper, you can alter the tense of words as long as you indicate changes with brackets. You should not use brackets to change the *meaning* of a quote, but only to make the quote work within the context of your own sentences. You may also use brackets to clarify meaning within a quotation—for instance, to clarify to whom a pronoun refers.

Ellipses

Ellipses are the three sequential periods you see in the shortened version of the quote above. Ellipses indicate that a portion of the quote has been cut, in this case to conserve space. You should bracket your own insertion of ellipses so as to distinguish these ellipses from any that might already reside in your chosen quotation.