Five Ways to Introduce Quotations

There are five basic ways to introduce quotations:

1. With a complete sentence
2. With "according to"
3. With a reporting verb
4. With a "that" clause
5. As part of your sentence

With a Complete Sentence

Write a sentence in which you make the point you want to support or illustrate with the quotation. End the sentence with a colon to introduce your sentence.

> A number of writers have pointed out that graduate school is a unique experience: "Graduate school, especially at the doctoral level, is unlike previous schooling in many ways" (Casanave, p. 17)

According to

According to can be followed by the name of a publication or a person. Put a comma after the name of the person or publication that introduces the quote.

> According to the IEP student manual, "To study in the IEP you must be **18 years old** and your English level must be 'high beginner' or higher" (p. 6).

> According to Dr. Braxley, many students enter graduate school after completing the UGA Intensive English Program.

With a Reporting Verb

Introduce the quotation with a reporting verb followed by a comma. After a reporting verb, the first letter of the first word in the quotation is usually capitalized even if it was not capitalized in the original quotation.

The verb you choose to introduce the quote show the reader how you thin the original writer felt about the words you are quoting. Some reporting verbs are neutral (for example, "explain" and "describe"). Others, such as "argue" and "insist," suggest that the original author was making a strong point. Some reporting verbs indicate that you are criticizing the original author because you are implying that they were incorrect or that you do not believe them. Examples are "claimed," and "assumed."

What tense should the reporting verb be?
That is a difficult question! It may depend on the citation style you are using. APA style advises introducing quotations with past tense verbs. MLA advises using present tense verbs. You should look at what professional writers in your field do and follow their practices.

Examples of Reporting Verbs
The table on the next page is taken from *Academic Writing for Graduate Students,* 3rd. Ed. By John Swales and Christine Feak (p. 213). This is an excellent book that I strongly recommend you to buy if you are planning to attend graduate school! The table shows you commonly used reporting verbs in academic writing.

Discipline	Verbs and Frequency					
	Rank					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Harder Sciences Biology Physics Electrical Engineering Mechanical Engineering Epidemiology Nursing Medicine	Describe* Develop* Propose Describe Find Find Show	Find Report Use* Show Describe Suggest Report	Report Study Describe Report Suggest Report Demonstrate	Show Find Show Discuss Report Identify* Observe	Suggest Expand* Publish* Give* Examine* Indicate Find	Observe Develop* Develop* Show Show Suggest
Softer Sciences Marketing Applied Linguistics Psychology Sociology Education Philosophy	Suggest Suggest Find Argue Find Say	Argue Argue Show Suggest Suggest Suggest	Find Show Suggest Describe* Note Argue	Demonstrate Explain Report Note Report Claim	Propose Find Demonstrate Analyze* Demonstrate Point out	Show Point out Focus* Discuss Provide* Think

Academic Writing for Graduate Students, 3rd. Ed. By John Swales and Christine Feak (p. 213).

The asterisk (*) was not in the original table, but has been added. See notes below!

Using "that" after a reporting verb

Most verbs can be followed by a "that" clause, but not all verbs! The verbs in the above table that are marked with * <u>cannot</u> be followed by a "that" clause (that plus a subject and verb such as "Smith <u>suggested that the data were misleading</u>". The verbs followed by * should be followed by a noun or a noun phrase such as "The authors <u>described the results of the study</u>."

Another point about "that"

"That" often introduces reported speech—in other words speech that has been changed from the original quotation:

Quotation: My mother said, "I cannot walk as quickly as I used to."

Reported speech: My mother said that she could not walk as quickly as she used to.

Make the Quote Part of Your Sentence

This is particularly useful for quoting just a few words:

> Life in the Middle Ages has often been described as "nasty, short, and brutish."
> The phrase "the mother of all battles" was coined by Saddam Hussein.

References

Casanave, C. (2008). *Learning the literacy practices of graduate school: Insiders'
    reflections on academic enculturation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
Swales, J. and Feak, C. (2012) *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks
    and skills*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press