

# INTEGRATING QUOTES

## Why Use Quotes in Your Essay?

The essay you write for class must be **your** essay. It should be your own ideas and in your own words. However, many essay assignments will ask that you use sources or quotes. So why would you use quotes in an essay that is supposed to be your own work?

1. To prove that your ideas are correct
2. To illustrate your point of view
3. To demonstrate how you arrived at an original idea of your own

## When to Use Quotes in Your Essay

Usually, you will not use any quotes in your essay's introduction. An introduction should be entirely in your own words.

The paragraphs in the body of your essay will begin with your topic sentence (the statement that tells the readers what the rest of the paragraph will be talking about). Again, these will be in your own words. Do not start a paragraph with a quote.

After you have given the topic sentence and explained what you will be writing about in your paragraph, you can consider using a quote that proves or illustrates what you claimed in your topic sentence.

After the quote, show how it supports your point or idea; this will be in your own words and will demonstrate the connection between your idea and the quote you've used. It will explain to the reader why you chose the quote that you did and why it is relevant to your main point; the quote does not make your point for you. Do not end a paragraph with a quote.

**Quotations can never stand by themselves. They must be introduced and explained.**

Topic Sentence



O'Brien's character in his novel, The Things They Carried, is able to sort through his emotions by writing about what he experienced in Vietnam.

Quotation



The method of story-telling is effective for him, because "by telling stories, you objectify your own experience. You separate it from yourself. You pin down certain truths" (158).

Relevance



His stories thus become a type of therapy for him where O'Brien can discover the lessons he learned without feeling directly involved.

## How to Integrate Quotes in a Sentence

Remember, a quote should never appear in a sentence by itself, because then there is no context for the quote.

Example: Men are the sole cause of the war. "May God forgive the men who brought about this war" (Rhodes 260).

Here, the reader can be confused or the reading can be disturbed because there is no warning that a quote is coming, and there is no context for the quote.

Men are described as the sole cause of the war when Christian Rhodes states "May God forgive the men who brought about this war" (Rhodes 260).

Here, the reader knows that someone else's opinion is being used to support your own idea, and it gives a context to the quote.

## Use Signal Phrases

A quote can be smoothly integrated into the sentence by using a signal phrase.

A signal phrase can be set up in three ways:

1. Writing a complete sentence followed by a colon and then the quote

Example: Demeter is not actively responsible for the plants' growth, but passively so: "When Demeter felt especially fine, tiny shoots of barley or oats would spring up in the footprints She left" (110).

2. Writing an incomplete sentence, followed by a comma and then the quote

Example: The author shows that Demeter is seen as passively responsible for the plants' growth, saying, "When Demeter felt especially fine, tiny shoots of barley or oats would spring up in the footprints She left" (110).

3. Writing a statement that ends in *that* or a signal phrase and then the quote

Example: Demeter's passive responsibility in the plants' growth is clear when the author states that "When Demeter felt especially fine, tiny shoots of barley or oats would spring up in the footprints She left" (110).

You can create your own signal phrase by mixing these basic styles with verbs. There are many verbs you can use to help you build your own signal phrase:

adds	claims	illustrates	reasons
admits	comments	implies	says
agrees	compares	insists	states
argues	demonstrates	notes	suggests
asserts	denies	observes	thinks
believes	emphasizes	points out	writes

Examples: Mrs. Bentley sums up the experience of the physical prairie landscape when she admits that "only a great artist could ever paint the prairie, the vacancy and stillness of it" (Ross 78).

Lind also is able of realizing the threat of landscape, but is equally incapable of giving it a definition: "'Mark – this place is sinister – can't you feel the *dread* in it?'" (Ostenso 210).

D.J. Jones emphasizes the effect the landscape has on a novel's characters by asserting that "the land becomes...the irrational in the lives of the characters. And the more powerful those elements are, the more...demonic the land and the figures associated with it may become" (Jones 34).

There are times (especially when you are writing about literature) when you can move right into the quote without using a signal phrase, but do this carefully by making sure you are integrating the quote in a way that is grammatically correct.

Examples: When Jake sees Gitl for the first time in three years, "...he vaguely wishes that her release were delayed indefinitely" (34), showing that he is not prepared to combine the "un-American appearance" (34) of his wife with his American lifestyle.

Mrs. Bentley does not expect her garden will ever grow, and indeed, "the garden is bare, inert...It dies slowly...the yellow stalks...shrivel and droop" (Ross 119).

## Technical Rules for Quoting

### 1. Ellipses Points

If you want to make a long quote shorter in order to present the reader with a more concise quotation, do so using an ellipsis, which is three periods, each period having a space before and after it (example: " . . . ").

Example: The narrator shows her belief that landscape can affect the human when she says that "the sound of that tinkling brook, for ever rolling by, filled my heart with a strange melancholy, which for many nights deprived me of rest. I loved it, too. The voice of waters in the stillness of night, always had an extraordinary effect upon my mind" (107) (Original Text)

The narrator shows her belief that landscape can affect the human when she says that "the sound of that tinkling brook...filled my heart with a strange melancholy...The voice of waters...always had an extraordinary effect upon my mind" (107).

However, be careful not to cut words that change the tone or meaning of a quote.

### 2. Adding Text to Quotes

The quote you use should make grammatical sense with the rest of your sentence. Therefore, you may sometimes have to add words to a quote, or modify the verb form in the quoted text. You do this by enclosing the added material material in

square brackets (like this: [ ] ).

Example: The narrator is grateful for the separation that nature gives him from the battle, and "conceived Nature to be a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy" (100) (Original Text)

The narrator is grateful for the separation that nature gives him from the battle, and "conceive[s] Nature to be a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy" (100).

#### 4. Block Quotes

If you are quoting 4 or more lines of text, indent the quoted lines ten spaces from the left margin. Double-space the quote as you do the rest of your essay, and do not use quotation marks.

Example: Douglass is particularly blunt in his assessment of "Christian" behavior in the south:

I assert most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes – a justifier of the most appalling barbarity, - a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds, - and a dark shelter under, which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection (53).

#### 5. Quoting Poetry

Use the poem's line number instead of page numbers to identify the quote.

If you are quoting three lines or less of poetry, put a slash (/) between the lines to mark the line break

Example: The need for God's violent intervention is repeated in "The Holy Ghost" when the speaker describes himself as "Halfe wasted with youths fires, of pride and lust,/Must with new stormes be weatherbeat" (4-5).

If you are quoting more than three lines, you must block quote them (see above). However, do not double-space a block quote from a poem. Rather, you must attempt to recreate the line spacing and indenting of each line as it is in the original.

Example: Williams uses visual spacing to create a dramatic pause in the poem, as he does in this section of "Death":

Dead  
his eyes  
rolled up out of  
the light - - a mockery  
(39-42)