Using Quotations

What to Quote

Use quotes that prove your claims or give some type of compelling evidence. The quote should be rich with information that tells us about the characters or relates to the theme in some way. The quote could also provide an expert opinion or a statistic.

How to Integrate Quotes into Your Writing

Many people think that simply putting the quote on the page is enough, but you must be sure that you provide an adequate **context** for what is stated in the quote. In other words, describe who said the quote, when, and why if it is important to showing what the quote proves. You must leave no question as to why the quote is important.

...describe who said the quote, when, and why...

Altering Quotes So They Fit Your Essay

The only time quotation marks (" ") are used is when one is copying, word for word, the exact statements made by someone. This does not mean that the words must be dialogue. Any words in a novel, including narration, are quotes. The words may be changed but only when specific punctuation is used that indicates the changes made. Ellipses (. . .) are used to indicate that something has been omitted. Brackets ([ ]) are used to replace a word/phrase or to add a word/phrase to a quote

Ellipses (. . .) are used to indicate that something has been omitted.

Brackets ([ ]) are used to replace a word/phrase or to add a word/phrase to a quote.
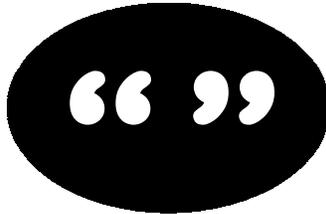
Making Quotes Fit the Essay

Quotes must fit smoothly with your words. You may use the quotes at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence, but they must be incorporated into your words. They should not stand alone in their own sentence.

Use "stated," "said," "agreed," "retorted," etc.

Some suggestions on how to make your quotes fit your essays:

- Use *stated, said, agreed, retorted, etc.*
- Use a colon when the quote proves your statement directly
- Use a pronoun reference
- Use "As ___ said"
- Use the smooth completion of a sentence
- Use "that"

EXAMPLES

Beginning of sentence
using stated: "Smoking is a danger to us all," stated the Surgeon General (58).
using a colon: Many women are tired of being thought of as objects: "We should begin to rethink our definition of 'femininity' in this society," remarked Elaine Benis, mother of three (9).

Middle of sentence
using pronoun reference: The professor opened his speech with a discussion of what he called the "beginning of the end of society" in which he discussed problems occurring in major cities (10).
using that: Socrates stated that "the true worth of an individual may be seen in how [he] wears his toga," a statement which displays the wit and charisma of the philosopher (5).
using As...said: As my mother has said, "A person should know his limitations," and I believe we should accept those limitations.

End of a sentence
smooth completion of a sentence: In The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvoir has described an experience as one in which the girl "becomes as object, and she sees herself as object" (378).
using a comma: Any unfaithfulness is, as the candidate phrased it, "between me and Lee [his wife] and me and God" (4).

Divided by your own words
"Science usually prefers the literal to the nonliteral term," Kinneavy writes, "that is, figures of speech are often out of place in science" (177).
"I enjoy my freedom," explained Erin, a high school junior. "It gives me the opportunity to do what I want and to think about where my life is headed" (40).