

Using Quotes from the Text as Evidence

- 1.) When writing essays, it is important to use textual evidence to support your claim.
- 2.) Any time you use words from the text in *your* paper, you must use quotation marks and site the source (author's last name and page number). The punctuation goes after the parenthesis (see student example below).
- 3.) When quotes are being used as evidence, they belong in the body paragraphs, not the introduction or conclusion. (Quotations can be used as a hook, but they should not also be repeated as evidence later in the essay.)
- 4.) Quotes should not be used in a topic sentence since the topic sentence is the main idea of the paragraph. Quotes are usually used as evidence, not a main idea.
- 5.) After you have explained a point, or reason in a body paragraph, then you should try to find textual evidence that will help you prove that point.
- 6.) When using a quote as evidence, you need to incorporate the quote into part of your own words. This is called *integrating the quote* or *quote integration*. A quote should not stand alone as its own sentence; this is called a *floating quote*.
- 7.) Instead of letting your quote *float* alone as its own sentence, you need to introduce it properly by fitting it grammatically and logically into your own writing.

Read the following passage from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee:

...What Mr. Radley did was his own business. If he wanted to come out, he would. If he wanted to stay inside his own house he had the right to stay inside free from the attentions of inquisitive children, which was a mild term for the likes of us. How would we like it if Atticus barged in on us without knocking, when we were in our rooms at night? We were, in effect, doing the same thing to Mr. Radley. What Mr. Radley did might seem peculiar to us, but it did not seem peculiar to him. Furthermore, had it never occurred to us that the civil way to communicate with another being was by the front door instead of a side window? Lastly, we were to stay away from that house until we were invited there, we were not to play an asinine game he had seen us playing or make fun of anybody on this street or in this town—...

Read the following student example of how to integrate a quote into your own words:

Jem's childhood innocence caused him to be curious, and that curiosity led him to keep making Arthur Radley come out of his house. It had not occurred to Jem that "the civil way to communicate with another being was by the front door instead of a side window" (Lee 49).

Notice three things:

- 1.) The student made a point first. In this case, the student is discussing the character's childhood innocence and how that affected his actions.
- 2.) The student only used the words that really helped to show an example of Jem's innocence, and excluded words that were not necessary to make the point. This exclusion of words did not change the meaning of the original text, but it did allow the writer to eliminate the pronouns that didn't agree with the rest of the student writer's sentence.
- 3.) The student used the quote within one of his sentences. The quote is properly introduced ("It had not occurred to Jem that the..."), and this introduction helps integrate the quote so that the cited evidence flows smoothly with the rest of the essay.

In Turnitin, if you see the following revision comments on your essay draft, then you know that you need to revise how you are using quotes in your document:

Float

Floating quotation:

When you quote from another source, you must also link the quotation to your own writing. A quotation must not float independently in your paragraph. Instead, make sure you introduce your quotation properly by fitting it grammatically and logically to your own words.

CutQ

Cut quotation down:

Quotations from outside sources are important in constructing a convincing argument. However, a writer does not always need to reproduce a sentence from another source in its entirety, especially if parts of that sentence are irrelevant or make the paragraph too long. If you choose to leave out some text from an original source, you must mark the missing words with three equally spaced periods (...) called an ellipsis. An ellipsis has little use when expressing your own thoughts, but it is a valuable tool in presenting the words of others.