

Incorporating an Effective Quote into Your Writing

Quote

Quoting is using another author's words verbatim in your text. Sometimes this is necessary because there is no better way to state the fact than the way it was originally written. When you quote you must follow some very important steps. Every quote must be *set up* with introductory statements and *backed up* with an analysis. We'll follow the XYZ approach:

X – The X describes the context that precedes the actual evidence. It's the point you are trying to prove with your evidence. This information tells the reader *who* said the quote and in *what* context. Think of the X as preparing the reader for the quote.

Y – The Y is the precise quote, which should be lead into with an introductory phrase, or a lead-in. Make sure that the Y (the quote) is directly related to the X and Z. Here are some rules to follow:

1. You must begin with an introductory phrase. For example, you would write...
 - a. According to Michael Levine, a former agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency, "quote goes here."
2. If there are parts of the quotation that are not useful or relevant for you, do not include them. You must, however, account for them by using an ellipsis [. . .].
 - a. Do not use ellipses before or after a quote—only in the middle.
 - b. You must put a space between each period.
3. If you need to change anything (verb tense, pronoun/antecedent, etc.), put it in brackets. They look like this: []. Read the sentence aloud to make sure it makes sense with your X and Z.
4. The citation, or parenthetical documentation, falls at the end of the *entire sentence*.

Examples:

- a. According to Michael Levine, a former agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency, we should "call off the hounds" (Bandow).
 - b. We should "call off the hounds," according to Michael Levine, a former agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency (Bandow).
5. Overusing the verbs *tells*, *says*, or *states* is monotonous. Here are some other verbs you might like:
 - a. Acknowledges, adds, admits, affirms, agrees, argues, asserts, believes, claims, comments, compares, confirms, contends, declares, demonstrates, denies, disputes, emphasizes, endorses, grants, illustrates, implies, notes, observes, points out, reasons, refutes, rejects, reports, responds, states, suggests, thinks, underlines, writes

Z – The Z is the analysis of the quote. This requires you to put the X and the Y together. The analysis comes out of your very smart brain and does not need to be cited. The Z elaborates on the quote and provides an analysis that will help the reader better understand your point. If you're concerned that you have not written a good Z, ask yourself these questions:

Does the Z relate to the X? the Y?

Does the Z point back to my topic sentence and help prove my point?

Does the Z relate to my overall thesis statement at all?

Prompt: Analyze Hurston's use of one motif in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and how it illustrates one of the novel's themes.

I would like to write an essay that proves that Hurston's use of **the mule** helps prove her claim that **black women are burdened by the most difficult circumstances in life**.

Thesis statement: Hurston's use of the mule helps prove her claim that black women are burdened by the most difficult circumstances in life.

1st Example: Nanny's sermon about black women

Topic sentence: At a young age, Janie learns about the heavy load that black women are forced to carry from her grandmother.

I need to find a quote that expresses this point.

X – Nanny has lived a long life and has an honest, though sad, view of her role in society.

Y – She expounds to Janie, “De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see” (Hurston 14).

Z – Nanny understands that the heaviest burdens, passed down from the white man to the black man, ultimately fall on the shoulders of black women. She wishes to spare Janie from that fate.