

## How to Integrate Quotes

Quotes allow you to show the reader **an example of the language that influenced your thinking**. They can be very persuasive and informative. Quotes also show that you've done the reading. It's advisable to quote only relevant words—those words that support and relate to your argument. The more you quote, the more someone has to read; the more that person has to read, the greater the chance for misunderstanding and boredom! So quote sparingly.

Try to quote efficiently by **integrating quotes with your sentences**. Imagine you're in literature class and your professor assigns a question on *The Odyssey*: Why wasn't Poseidon at Olympus? Some students answer with a quote and no explanation, like the following: "He had gone to accept sacrifice of bull and rams, and there he sat and enjoyed pleasure of the feast" (Homer 3).

Don't throw quotes at the reader; instead, incorporate them into sentences with your own words and then explain what those quotes mean. Here's a better response to that same question about *The Odyssey*: Poseidon was not at Olympus because he "had gone to accept a sacrifice" from supplicants and "feast" with them (Homer 3).

Imagine, again, you're in that same literature class studying *The Odyssey* and the professor asks you to provide an example of a Homeric epithet.

Some students would provide a very long quote, most of which is irrelevant, like the following: One instance of a Homeric epithet is in *The Odyssey* when Homer says "Bright-eyed Athena answered him: 'Father of ours, Son of Cronos, King of Kings, if it is now the pleasure of the blessed gods that the wise Odysseus shall return to Ithaca, let us send our Messenger, Hermes'" (Homer 5).

Remember to quote only relevant parts of the text. A better, much more concise and clear response to that question would quote only the relevant words, like the following: One instance of a Homeric epithet is in *The Odyssey* when Homer describes Athene as "Bright-eyed Athene" (Homer 5).

Note how this method of quoting little bits of key words and integrating those little bits into your sentences allows you to clearly present what's going on in the story. The reader doesn't have to interpret too much of the quoted text. You've contextualized the quote for the reader and eliminated extraneous words from the quotes, which prevents confusion.

Remember that quoting isn't enough to make your point. You've got to (1) explain what the quotes mean and (2) show how those quotes influenced your thinking.

Sometimes it's advisable to highlight the author of the quote and the author's credentials prior to quoting. This information can give your writing credibility by association and help the reader to be more receptive to the ideas in the quote if the author of the quote has an impressive background. For example, you might write something like the following: According to Joseph Anderson, Professor of Cosmology at MIT and the author of 12 books on the creation of the universe, "No scientist should dismiss the possibility that God exists and that God created the universe."

### Exercise on Using Supporting Quotes

1. On a quiz, your Freshman Seminar professor asks you to answer the following question on Dave Ellis' *Becoming a Master Student*.

Question: What are the three parts of the note-taking process? Quote from the reading for support.

*This is the relevant quote from the reading that you want to use to support your response to the question:*

“Effective note taking consists of three parts: observing, recording, and reviewing. First, you observe an event—a statement by an instructor, a lab experiment, a slide show of an artist’s works, or a chapter of required reading. Then you record your observations of that event; that is, you take notes. Finally, you review what you have recorded” (Ellis 149).

*In the space below, incorporate and cite quotes to answer the question:*

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2. For homework, your history professor has asked you to answer the following question on Joseph Ellis’ book *His Excellency, George Washington*.

Question: What was Washington’s most important job? Quote from the reading for support.

*This is the relevant quote from the reading that you want to use to support your response to the question:*

“Washington’s highest duty was not to answer his critics or satisfy his sense of personal honor, but rather to win the war” (Ellis 108).

*In the space below, incorporate and cite quotes to answer the question:*

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