

Correctly Using Quotes in Your Literary Analysis Essay

Basic checklist:

- You're choosing quotes purposefully and meaningfully
- Your quotes are developing an argument about how the text "works"
- Your quotes support your argument; that is, your quotes are not counterproductive or "push again" the argument you're developing

Punctuating and Indenting Quotes

For the most part, you must reproduce the spelling, capitalization, and internal punctuation of the original exactly.

However, there are some exceptions:

Changing the closing punctuation

Alter the closing punctuation in order to incorporate it into a sentence of your own

Example:

- "Configuration is fascinating," Hermoine emphasized.

Commas and periods go inside the closing quotation marks; the other punctuation marks go outside.

Example:

- Katniss insisted that the capital "is dangerous"; indeed, she fled from them.

- Why does Tris keep arguing that "She is not Divergent"?

Use ellipses when removing text

To be more brief you may omit text from a quote, to do this use ellipsis points (three spaced periods).

Example:

Finally, by the end of the school day, Alice feels attraction to Jasper and also a new respect: "She liked his laugh. . . . She liked his awkwardness. There was a lot in that man after all" (110).

Using brackets when changing the text

When quoting, you may alter grammatical forms (tense of a verb or the person of a pronoun so the quotation conforms grammatically. Indicate this by placing square brackets around the change.

Example: "her" replacing "your" of the original so that the quote fits the P.O.V.

- When she hears Charlie's answer, Mary Elizabeth seems surprised, but not totally shocked. She tells him to "fix [his] language." He had expected her to be proud of him.

Indenting Quotes

Whenever a quotation is **more than four lines** than you must **block** that quotation.

A final note...

** Do not use two quotations in a row, without intervening material of your own.