**How to Use Quotations Correctly**

Quotations are extremely important. Quotes are often the best way to support your thesis. After you choose your quote/passage, you’ll need to implement your quote/passage and format the citation correctly.

1. CHOOSE YOUR QUOTE

Be certain you are accurately representing the meaning of the author.

* Don’t ever write that the author said a book was “terrific” if he really said “The book is terrible.”
* Do your best to stay brief. Use the absolute shortest possible section of a passage to make your point.

**Too long**: In*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Jim demonstrates just how superstitious he is.Huck narrates that Jim “said that handling a snake-skin was such awful bad luck that maybe we hadn’t got to the end of it yet. He said he druther see the new moon over his left shoulder as much as a thousand times than take up a snake-skin in his hand. Well I was getting to feel that way myself, though I’ve always reckoned that looking at the new moon over your left shoulder is one of the carelessest and foolishest things a body can do” (Twain 65).

**Shorter quote**: In*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Jim demonstrates just how superstitioushe is by telling Huck that he’d “druther see the new moon over his left shoulder as much as a thousand times” rather than handle a snake skin again (Twain 65).

2. IMPLEMENT YOUR QUOTATION WITH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CORRECT APPROACHES:

Method 1: Use a phrase that lets the reader know who is speaking, plus a comma.

- Huck explains to the reader, “he was resking his freedom to do it” (Twain 353).

- “He was resking his freedom to do it,” Huck explained (Twain 353).

Method 2: Use an independent clause that refers to what happens in the quotation plus a colon.

* Jim took considerable risks to accompany Huck: “he was resking his freedom to do it” (Twain 353).
* Huck explains the character flaws that led to his adventure: “It was because my heart warn’t right; it was because I warn’t square; it was because I was playing double” (Twain 269).

Method 3: Implement a quoted phrase/passage into your sentence. In this case, you don’t have to add any punctuation between your words and the quote.

* Huck tells the reader “it was because my heart warn’t right; it was because I warn’t square; it was because I was playing double” (Twain 269).
* Huck explains that Jim “was resking his freedom to do it” (Twain 269).

1. EXPLAIN THE QUOTATION, OR YOUR READER WON’T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU USED IT. FOR EVERY SINGLE LINE YOU QUOTE, EXPECT TO WRITE AT LEAST TWO SENTENCES OF YOUR OWN ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION AFTERWARDS.

Huck explains the character flaws that led to his adventure: “It was because my heart warn’t right; it was because I warn’t square; it was because I was playing double” (Twain 269). It isn’t until after the adventure is over that Huck understands the bigger picture of his mistakes. Prior to the trip north, Huck believed that Jim was less of a man because he was a slave. By the end of the trip, he understands that Jim is the best man he knows and that slavery is inhumane and immoral.

\*\*\*\*\*In order to explain/discuss your quote, ask yourself how the quote relates to your thesis and discuss the answer.

4. PUNCUTATE YOUR QUOTATION CORRECTLY.

Use the author’s punctuation (like question marks), but keep the capitalization and periods from your own writing. In MLA format, the period for in-text citations follows the parenthetical reference.

* “Go on en save me, nemmine ‘bout a doctor f’r to save dis one?” asked Jim (Twain 340).
* Huck tells Jim “you’re a free man again” (Twain 340).

Use single quotation marks to indicate quoted dialogue or text within another quote.

* “Read ‘*Huckleberry Finn*’” she told me (Twain 340).

If you remove words from a quote you cite, replace the words with an ellipsis: 3 periods with a space between each. If the ellipsis falls at the end of a quote, omit the first space.

* Twain writes, “That’s just the way . . . he don’t want to take no consequences of it” (Twain 268).

Use “block quotes” if the quotation is more than four lines in length.

Introduce the quote with a colon, indent each line by hitting “Tab” twice, and do not use quotation marks. For MLA format, include the parenthetical reference outside of the final punctuation.

Huck is horrified at the desperation of his situation:

“I staid in the tree till it begun to get dark, afraid to come down. Sometimes I heard guns away off in the woods; and twice I seen little gangs of men gallop past the log store with guns; so I reckoned the trouble was still agoing on. I was might down-hearted; so I made up my mind I wouldn’t ever go anear that house again, because I reckoned I was to blame, somehow” (Twain 153).