

Using Citations in Expository Writing

One of the most valuable assets to expository writing is the incorporation of specific citations that tend to add depth and substance to points being conveyed in a paper. The following examples will give you direction in including cited material in your essays.

Unacceptable ways of using citations:

- **Do not introduce a citation in the following ways:**
 - A. This is seen in the following citation, "such ties swear me to his side as if he were my father."
 - B. In the quotation "A man I never saw" Oedipus confirms his ignorance of the identity of Laius.
- **Do not follow a citation with the statement "This quotation proves...."**
- **Never insert a citation without some kind of transition.**

Example: Oedipus does not realize that he is the murderer. "I speak of course as stranger to the story and stranger to the crime."

Better: Not realizing that he is the murderer, Oedipus says, "I speak of course as stranger to the story and stranger to the crime."

Acceptable ways to use citations:

- **Use of a cited phrase.**

Example: Over much of Wuthering Heights, there broods "a horror of great darkness."
- **Use of cited material from a critical source.**
 - A. By using a parenthetical citation.

Example: In A Death in the Family, Rufus searches for self-meaning through "an intense desire to know himself." (A parenthetical citation is required to acknowledge the source.)
 - B. By citing the critic's name
Example: As Paul Roche explains in the play's introduction, "it was foretold because it was going to happen; it was not going to happen because it was foretold."
- **Use of an ellipsis.**

An ellipsis is an intentional omission of words from cited material. If you decide that it is unnecessary to reproduce all the words of the author whom you are citing, use three periods to indicate an omission; when the omission is at the end of the sentence, use four periods.
Example: Rufus saw his identity in his name; therefore, he lost his security when "others yelled poor man's name...and chanted a verse that he had often heard them yell at poor white trash...."
- **Use of brackets.**

Use brackets to indicate a change in the word form or to indicate an explanatory addition. By placing a word in bracket, the writer indicates that the word is not originally in the quoted material.
Example: John Dryden, a famous English poet, said, "Those who accuse him [Shakespeare] to have wanted knowledge give him the greater commendation; he was naturally learned."
Example: The monster, who was uncomfortable when he encountered darkness, explains that "a gentle light [stealing] over the heavens...[gave] him a sensation of pleasure."
Note: Do not overuse brackets or you defeat the purpose of quoting the material.

- **Use of indentation for long citation.**

Citations of more than four lines (or fifty words) are indented on both sides from the usual one-inch margin. A colon is used for punctuation before the citation and QUOTATION MARKS are NOT used.

Example: Materialism is just a small aspect of Holden's reasons for hating school which he complains is:

full of phonies, and all you do is study so that you can learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a Cadillac some day, and you have to keep making believe you give a damn if the football team loses, and all you do is talk about girls and liquor all day....

- **Citation of direct dialogue.**

Citations of a character's actual spoken words include both " and ' on both sides of the citation.

Example: Realizing that his family does not understand him, Walter screams, "I am giant among ants'" (Hansberry 94).

- **Citation of poetry and Shakespearean plays.**

When citing poetry or plays written in poetic style, make sure to indicate line breaks with a forward slash, /. This slash shows where one line ends and the others begin.

Example: The son, returning for his father's funeral, shows maturity because "time had whittled down to mere hills / The great mountains of my childhood."

Example: Montague understands Romeo is a melodramatic young man who as "'soon as the all-cheering sun / Should in the farthest east begin to draw / the shady curtains'" (Shakespeare 293).

REMEMBER that a citation is only effective if it is **appropriate** and **relevant** to your topic. There are many times when your own choice of words is far more concise and clear than those of the author.

Words to introduce a citation:

says	defines	rationalizes	implies
delineates	theorizes	reflects	relates
depicts	summarizes	observes	shows
denotes	continues	offers	divulges
remarks	concludes	asserts	proposes
comments	reasons	interprets	stipulates
proclaims	elucidates	mentions	acknowledges
states	interjects	expands	adds
avows	concedes	inquires	ponders
muses	cites	exhibits	postulates
enunciates	relates	points out	professes