

## SHS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT GUIDE TO BLENDING QUOTATIONS

A common fault of student papers is the absence of smooth transitions from text to quotation. It is not enough to weave quotations into your paper unless you always lead smoothly into the quotation and explain its relevance to the main idea. Consider the following:

**Poor:** The following lacks an introduction to the quotation or has a weak one, and the explanation is missing or vague.

The narrator's wife in "Cathedral" dealt with a sarcastic husband. "Maybe I could take him bowling" (Carver 457).

This quote is from page 457 in Carver's story. "Maybe I could take him bowling." This shows that the narrator's wife in "Cathedral" had to deal with a sarcastic husband.

**Better:** The quotation is now more smoothly introduced, its speaker is identified in the text, and it provides a brief explanation.

The narrator in "Cathedral" was insensitive and sarcastic towards his wife's friend. "Maybe I could take him bowling" (Carver 457). His suggestion lacks sensitivity.

**Best:** The quotation is smoothly introduced, the speaker is identified in the text, the situation in which it is spoken is mentioned, and it provides an in-depth explanation.

The narrator in "Cathedral" was an insensitive person. When he learns that Robert, his wife's blind friend, is coming for an overnight visit, he sarcastically declares, "Maybe I could take him bowling" (Carver 457). His lack of sensitivity towards Robert is apparent since bowling is not likely an activity that a blind person engages in.

Note that in the *best* example, the word "declares" is used instead of "says." It is easy to say "he said," but good writing style demands that you be more imaginative—and less repetitive—in introducing quotations. Use a dictionary or a thesaurus to help you. There is a word bank you can reference on the next page.

## BLENDING QUOTES WORD BANK:

declares  
asserts  
announces  
demands  
proclaims  
insists  
persists

stresses  
emphasizes  
demonstrates  
avows

argues  
contests  
alleges  
claims  
contends  
challenges

regrets  
apologizes  
repents  
atones

discloses  
reveals  
confesses  
divulges  
unveils  
publicizes

confirms  
affirms  
accepts  
reassures  
praises  
commends  
applauds  
concur

refutes  
rejects  
denies  
recants  
renounces  
denies  
recants

acknowledges  
recognizes  
tolerates  
grants  
concedes  
admits

pleads  
beseeches  
appeals  
entreats  
implores

scolds  
warns  
retorts  
complains  
protest  
objects  
criticizes

## IMPORTANT TIPS!

### DO NOT...

- ❖ use “I think” “I believe” [No “I” statements] /Since it’s a persuasive essay, we know it’s your opinion.
- ❖ use YOU...never address the reader
- ❖ use the words **get, gotten, things, something, kinda, whatever, stuff, very**
- ❖ use casual language and/or slang
- ❖ use trite expressions (ex: won the battle & lost the war, better safe than sorry)
- ❖ use “this quote shows”

## Presentation of Quotation

“A quotation can be a single word or an entire paragraph. Choose quotations carefully, keep them as brief as possible, and use them only when they are interesting, revealing, or necessary in the development of your text. A paper that is quotation heavy usually means a writer has not done much independent thinking. When you do quote material directly, be sure that the capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are the same as that in the original work. Any changes you makes should be clearly marked for your readers.” \*This material was quoted and adapted from Writers Inc (184).

### Short Quotations

If a quotation is **four typed lines or fewer**, work it into the body of your paper and put quotation marks around it.

Blacker suggests, “I tell you what I’d do—I’d swap this electric train for one of your wafers—consecrated, mind. It’s got to be consecrated!” (Greene 251).

## Long Quotations

Quotations of **more than four typed lines** should be set off from the rest of the writing by indenting each line 10 spaces and double-spacing the material. Do **not** use quotation marks. Generally a colon is used to introduce quotations set off from the text.

After the narrator brings home a cat to replace Pluto, he laments:

I soon found a dislike to it arising within me. This was just the reverse of what I had anticipated; but—I know not how or why it was—its evident fondness for myself rather disgusted and annoyed me. By slow degrees these feelings of disgust and annoyance rose into the bitterness of hatred. I avoided the creature; a certain sense of shame, and the remembrance of my former deed of cruelty, preventing me from physically abusing it. I did not, for some weeks, strike, or otherwise violently ill use it; but gradually—very gradually I came to look upon it with unutterable loathing, and to flee silently from its odious presence, as from the breath of a pestilence. (Poe 140)

## Partial Quotations

If you want to leave out part of the quotation, use an ellipsis to signify the omission. An ellipsis ( . . . ) is three periods with a space before and after each one. (Note: Anything you take out of a quotation should not change the author's original meaning.)

The narrator states, "I soon found a dislike to it arising within me . . . I avoided the creature . . . Very gradually I came to look upon it with unutterable loathing . . ." (Poe 140).

## Adding to Quotations

Use brackets [like this] to signify any material you add within a quotation to help its meaning.

"He had put on his best black Sunday clothes and, as though he could never quite escape the smear of his profession [he was a baker], he had a dab of dried talcum on his cheek . . ." (Greene 252).

## Quoting Shakespeare (cited from [www.colby.edu](http://www.colby.edu))

When quoting a Shakespearean play, your references at the end of your quotations should refer to Act, scene, and line numbers, not to page numbers.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Bottom wishes to transform his experience into art: "I will Peter Quince to write a ballet of this dream. It shall be called 'Bottom's Dream,' because it hath no bottom" (4.1.214-16).

In this reference, the quotation would come from Act 4, scene 1, lines 214-16.

If you are quoting more than three lines, you will need to indent your quotation. The lines should be arranged as they appear in the text if you are quoting verse and arranged as paragraph if you are quoting prose.

Richard ultimately recognizes how he has destroyed his own position:

How sweet music is  
When time is broke, and no proportion kept.  
So is it in the music of men's lives:  
Here have I the daintiness of ear  
To check time broke in a disordered string,  
But for the concord of my state and time,  
Had not the ear to hear my true name broke.  
I wasted time, and now doth time waste me. (5.5.41-49)

### **Quoting Poetry** (cited from [www.shepherd.edu](http://www.shepherd.edu))

The rules for poetry differ from the rules for quoting prose in two key ways:

- \*Poetry requires writers to cite line numbers not page numbers.
- \*Poetry requires writers to keep line breaks in tact.

Quoting 1, 2 or 3 lines of poetry. You can quote three or fewer lines of poetry without having to place the lines in a block quote. Use quotation marks. Use a slash to indicate the break between lines. Put the line numbers in parentheses. Place the period at the end of the line number(s):

Heaney directly compares poetry writing to the digging his ancestors did: "Between my finger and my thumb / The squat pen rests. / I'll dig with it" (29-31).

Quoting 4 or more lines of poetry. If you quote four or more lines of poetry, you need to block indent the poem ten spaces on the left margin.

The author, David Bottoms, is wise to the fact that men often use sports to communicate their feelings. The persona of the poem, however, takes years to realize his father's message. Once he realizes the importance of sports to their relationship, he sends a message back to his father:

and I never learned what you were laying down.  
Like a hand brushed across the bill of a cap,  
let this be the sign  
I'm getting a grip on the sacrifice. (20-23)

Do not use ellipses if you start quoting a poem midline. If you want to start quoting in the middle of a line of poetry, just add indentions to indicate the text is only a partial line. Do not use ellipses (. . .).

McDonald paints a picture of a family in pain, but he uses images that usually show up in cozier circumstances, such as children reading the comics:

At dawn  
we folded the quilts  
and funnies, crept softly  
through our chores. (13-16)