

## Quoting Rules

*This handout is designed to help you understand how quoting works. If you follow these rules, you will have a well-supported essay.*

### Purpose

One of the first things you need to understand is what a quote is. A quote happens when you use another person's words to support what you want to say (or write). You never refer to the quote though as a quote in your analysis.

Correct: "The water in the glass is dirty." This illustrates that...

Incorrect: "The water in the glass is dirty." This quote illustrates that...

*Rationale: By saying that something is a quote, by giving it that title, what you are actually doing is saying that the source you took it from actually took it from someone else. This may sound weird, but that is just how it works.*

### Context

The biggest problem with quoting is that it is often used in isolation, without context. This pulls the quote out of the main idea of a paragraph, setting it apart from the main idea. This is why you have been taught to use lead-ins: they should be used to connect the quote with the main idea of paragraph. Now the trick is to make good use of lead-ins.

Correct: The author clearly wanted the reader to see that "the water in the glass is dirty."

Correct: The first use of imagery can be seen when the author says "the water in the glass is dirty."

Incorrect: There is imagery in the story. "The water is the glass is dirty."

*Rationale: It is always good to prime the reader before they read the quote. This allows the reader to see where you are going with the quote before you use it. It also connects the quote to the rest of the paragraphs. Ultimately, by blending your ideas with your sources ideas, you make both stronger.*

### Analysis

Providing analysis for the quotes you use is a part of good argument. There is no example to accompany this, but the suggestion is that you provide a 3:1 ratio for the number of words in your paragraphs. Three of your words for each quoted word.

*Rationale: You want your essay to be your essay. This ensures that your essay is not written by your sources.*

## Grammatical Correctness

There is a simple rule you need to understand. The grammar of the sentence is more important than the grammar of the quote. The most important rules to follow are that a sentence begins with a capital and ends with a period, and there should not be either a capital (except for a proper noun) or period somewhere in between, regardless of what happened in the source document.

Source Quote: “The water in the glass is dirty.” Notice, this is a complete sentence, therefore it has a capital to lead the sentence and period at the end. However, if you are going use this in our writing, you have to provide context, which means that your sentence will be more than just the quote.

Correct: The author clearly wanted the reader to see that “the water in the glass is dirty.”

Incorrect: The author clearly wanted the reader to see that “The water in the glass is dirty.”

Correct: “The water in the glass is dirty” is made clear by the author.

Incorrect: “The water in the glass is dirty.” is made clear by the author.

*Rationale: You want your reader to know where your sentences begin and end. This allows for that. To do otherwise creates confusion—and you don’t want a confused reader*

## Modifying Quotes

There are times where you need to change a quote to add clarity. This is perfectly acceptable; you just need to do it correctly. The correct way to indicate a change is to use [brackets] to highlight the changes that were made.

Source Quote: “The water in there is dirty.” Notice that this is different than previous quotes. This is done to show how brackets work

Correct: “The water in [the glass] is dirty.”

Incorrect: “The water in the glass is dirty.”

*Rationale: The brackets are what indicate a change has been made. If you change a quote and don’t use brackets, you are misrepresenting what the author said. That is bad.*

*Note: If the change you are making is for the sake of grammar, you don’t need to bracket. You are not changing words, just capitalization, which has no effect on meaning.*