

## GUIDELINES FOR USING SOURCES AND INTRODUCING QUOTATIONS

### 1) *Fundamental rules:*

- a). Always introduce all quotes. Never begin a sentence with a quote.
- b). Quote exactly, word for word, comma for comma, except for permissible changes in quotes, described below.
- c). Never use a quote without properly documenting it. The same goes for paraphrases and summaries. Failure to do so is plagiarism.

### 2) *Choosing Quotes:*

Quotes in essays (critical or research) have two basic purposes: to act as evidence supporting a point you are making, and to illustrate that point. Make sure that the quotes you use function in both ways. Quotes that are irrelevant to the point being made, are not clearly illustrative of it, or have only a casual or trivial connection to the point detract from your critical argument and may even make it invalid. For example, the following quote from The Displaced Person does not relate directly to the point the introduction to it is making:

While Mrs. Shortley is not a religious person, she is definitely spiritual:  
“Every time Mr. Guizac smiled, Europe stretched out in Mrs. Shortley’s  
Imagination, mysterious and evil, the devil’s experiment station”  
(O’ Connor 473).

The above quote not only *does not* illustrate what the writer means by “spiritual”, it also seems to contradict the assertion that Shortley is not “religious”—the reference to the devil suggests that Mrs. Shortley may indeed be a religious person. Further, the quote itself suggests something far more important about Mrs. Shortley’s character—her prejudice against foreigners—that the introduction to the quote ignores, implying that the writer of this paper either did not clearly understand the story or did not carefully choose his/her evidence. The following revision shows a more acceptable use of the quote:

While Mrs. Shortley claims not be a religious person, her thoughts about The Displaced Person—and the xenophobia she displays in them—are framed in Christian terms: “Every time Mr. Guizac smiled, Europe stretched out in Mrs. Shortley’s imagination, mysterious and evil, the devil’s experiment station” (O’ Connor 473). Clearly Mrs. Shortley is

religious when she considers what she fears and does not understand.

Furthermore, whenever you choose a quote, make sure that it refers to the character or idea/subject you are discussing. For example, if you are making a point about Mrs. Shortley, don't use a quote that refers to Mr. Guizac or Mrs. McIntyre. Such carelessness in quoting can call into question your whole thesis.

### 3) **Introducing Quotes:**

If you are using quotes as evidence and illustration, you will realize that quotes cannot **float** in a paper or essay in their separate sentences.

Without introductions, quotes may not have clear connections to the points being made. Also, by not introducing quotes, the writer is forcing the reader to decide what purpose the quote is serving in the essay—and this is the writer's work, not the reader's. Therefore, make it a rule never to begin a sentence with a quote; always begin with your own words.

You should always avoid monotony in the way you introduce short quotations and paraphrases into a paper or essay. Your paper or essay would suffer a great deal if you always used the same introductory phrase such as "Panthea Reid Broughton notes." Similarly, your paper or essay structure would be dull if you introduced reference material with the same kind of sentence structure: "Panthea Reid Broughton notes" and "Panthea Reid Broughton states."

Here are some ways to avoid these two kinds of monotony:

According to Panthea Reid Broughton, ".....in Absalom, Absalom!...truth is presented as elusive...."

Panthea Reid Broughton sees in Absalom, Absalom! man's capacity for commitment and faith.

Examining the central tension of Absalom, Absalom!, Panthea Reid Broughton finds it to consist of.....

The problem of man's relationship with God in Absalom, Absalom!, for Panthea Reid Broughton, is that, "The expectation that God will do something about injustice is mistaken because it is founded upon stubborn blindness to reality."

One critic even goes so far as to argue that the problem of the characters in Absalom, Absalom!, is “The tendency ...to slough off the human responsibility for seeing to things themselves.”

Some other **verbs** you may use to give variety to your introductions include the following:

***accepts, adds, admits, affirms, believes, calls, confirms, considers, contends, denies, emphasizes, explains, mentions, observes, points out, proposes, relies, remarks, reports, reveals, shows, submits, thinks, verifies, and writes.***