I. Opening quotation

With this method of writing, the first sentence of your theme is a direct quotation from the literary work you are analyzing. This quotation is set off from the rest of the paragraph to emphasize its special role. Several sentences that comment on the significance of the quotation follow the excerpt and lead into the thesis statement.

Here are two examples:

The Importance of Heroes

“Without heroes we’re all plain people and don’t know how far we can go.” (Malamud 140)

Iris Lemon’s comment to Roy Hobbs emphasizes the influence that heroes can have on other people. Iris believes that heroes such as Roy must try to be the best so that they can guide others. Being a hero, however, is a challenge. In The Natural, Bernard Malamud shows that a hero must struggle to set a good example for others.

Endurance despite Defeat

“...[W]hat beat you, he thought. ‘Nothing,’ he said aloud. ‘I went out too far!”’ (Hemingway 120)

Santiago considers the reason that his prize fish has been destroyed by sharks. He wonders why, after all of his hard work and suffering, he is defeated. At the end of the novel, Santiago decides that his choice to go out “too far” leads to his failure to bring in a huge fish. In Ernest Hemingway’s The Old Man and the Sea, Santiago remains undaunted even though his trophy is destroyed.
Notice these qualities in each of the previous examples:

1. The quotation should bear direct relevance to the focus in your thesis.
2. The choice should be a brief quotation. A single sentence is preferable but not essential. Avoid a long passage.
3. The quotation should be a complete sentence. Whether it is narrative or dialogue is your choice.

After you have selected an appropriate passage, you must devise several sentences that will accomplish these objectives:

1. Identify the speaker and/or context of passage
2. Comment on the significance of the quotation
3. Lead smoothly into your thesis

II. Author’s world view

The world view method attempts to generalize what kind of world the author envisions or believes to exist, based on the work he has written. Your statement of the world view should relate to your thesis. A sentence or two should be sufficient to explain the world view.

Here are two examples:

Although Santiago sees his big marlin viciously attacked by sharks, he does not feel a sense of personal failure in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*. The old man’s fishing experience suggests Hemingway’s view that a man can be defeated but not destroyed. Man’s pertinacious spirit cannot be broken even in trying circumstances. No matter how overwhelming the odds are, in Hemingway’s view, a man does not give up.

Bernard Malamud’s novel *The Natural* depicts a heroic baseball player striving to be the best who is faced with hard choices. Roy Hobbs’ experience in this book suggest Malamud’s world view that heroes are essential as role models in American society, yet being a hero is often difficult. Society needs heroes to model the best that man can be. These heroes, though, are also only human themselves. Just as they struggle to be the best, other people struggle to follow their examples and to aim for a better life. Heroes are needed to show the way.