ESSENTIALS OF QUOTATION FOR EXPOSITORY WRITING

1. Use quotations to introduce a theme, to give evidence, or to emphasize a point.

2. Two or three quotations in each expository or body paragraph (after the introduction and before the conclusion) are normal. Quotations should not take up more than one-fourth of the bulk of the theme or essay.

3. Select quotations carefully. Try to find quotations which require little or no editing (explanation of pronouns or change of tense, for example).

4. To add material or change the form of a word, use brackets [like these] around the altered word or phrase.

5. To delete material from a quotation, use ellipsis marks (three spaced periods) . . . Note that ellipsis marks do not take the place of necessary punctuation. If a period is needed to end a sentence before an ellipsis, for example, the period appears as a fourth dot. . . .

6. Do not change the verb tense of quotations to match the present tense of your analysis.

7. Quote the original source as accurately as possible, verbatim (word-for-word). If you cannot, use paraphrase, omitting quotations marks but still giving your source at the end of the paraphrased material.

8. Use a colon to say “evidence follows.” Never state the obvious by such introductions as “evidence for this point is found in the following quotation.” Be sure to prepare for each quotation properly. In the unique case of a quotation used to introduce an entire theme, the explanation follows immediately. Be sure that the full importance of the quotation is evident. Add detailed explanation after the quotation, as necessary.

9. Do not float quotations between paragraphs. In some instances, a quotation may be used to conclude the entire theme or essay, not as evidence but as a cumulation.

10. Punctuate and space each quotation according to its length in your final draft, as follows:

   Short quotations (after and before) - less than four lines in length—work the quotation into your text. Use double quotation marks to show when the quoted material begins and ends. If there are double quotation marks within the quotation itself, change them to single marks. Do not change spacing. In MLA format, give documentation in parentheses after the quotation but before the final period.

Example A - Aunt Louisa in her letter laments that her husband “laid down his life to protect a heritage of courageous men and spotless women” (219).

Example B - Uncle Buck celebrates Bayard’s killing of Redmond: “‘Yes, by Godfrey! Not only tracked him down and caught him but brought back the actual proof of it to where Rosa Millard could rest quiet’” (213).
NOTE: omissions in the quoted material are indicated by the syntax in the first example. The page citation is placed after the quotation but before the final period. No change in the spacing of the text is required.

*Long quotations* (after, after) - Quotations of four or more lines in the final format should be indented a full inch from the margin of the text on both right and left. This “blocking” takes the place of inserted quotation marks to indicate to the reader that the material is being quoted from another writer or source. Do not change any punctuation in the original material. The documentation is given after the quotation and after the final period.

Example C -

Bayard reflects on the difficulty that women like Aunt Louisa and Drusilla would evince in accepting the changed conditions after the Civil War:

> And so now Father’s troop and all the other men in Jefferson, and Aunt Louisa and Mrs. Habersham and all the women in Jefferson were actually enemies for the reason that the men had given in and admitted that they belonged to the United States but the women had never surrendered. (216)

EXCEPTION: Use the after, after format for quotations used directly after the title to introduce an entire theme. Include the author’s name with the page number, since you have not had a chance to mention the author’s name.

11. Include in parentheses after each quotation enough information to find the source in your Work(s) Cited list at the end of the theme. If you are using only one source, a page number will suffice, after you have stated the author and title of the work under analysis. For using more than one source, consult the MLA guide to documentation. A convenient website with this information is

MLA Style Online [http://www.mla.org/set_stl.htm](http://www.mla.org/set_stl.htm)

You may also obtain this information in hard copy from the library reference desk.

12. Compose a Work(s) Cited list according to MLA guidelines. Remember that each quoted source--book, article, video, website, or any other kind--must be included on this list (see file Work(s) Cited/Documentation). Consult with your teacher in the rough draft stage to be sure that your Work(s) Cited list is correct and complete.

**PLAGIARISM ALERT** - Know the difference between responsibly citing another writer and presenting someone else’s work as your own. This school’s honor code requires that your writing be strictly your own except for properly cited and documented sources. Consult your teacher for further explanation about plagiarism.