

Using Quotations in Literary Analysis

Direct Quotations: Always incorporate quotations into sentences of your own — don't just let a quotation "hang there"!

He almost turns into a child yelling, "Snow. It's snowing," (Santos 113) as if the snow has taken him back to his youth.

The image of a "cold and cowering and afraid" (114) fetus in the story "The Day the Dancers Came," shows what little control these men have over their lives.

Joining Sentences to Incorporate Quotations: Here's another way you can combine sentences you already have to incorporate a quotation.

ORIGINAL:

He lived in a very small room with no luxuries. Santos writes "The walls were bare except for a small framed painting in watercolor, a reproduction of a scene in Venice." (33)

REVISED:

He lived in a very small room with no luxuries: "The walls were bare except for a small framed painting in watercolor, a reproduction of a scene in Venice" (33).

Using Block Quotations: Remember to single-space block quotations, and indent them at least 10 spaces on both sides. You also do not need to use quotation marks. At the end of the block quotation, the closing punctuation goes first, then the parenthetical reference of author and page number.

Despite calamitous circumstance, these hurt men kept their heads held high, hiding "behind that princely mien" (44). Regarding this particular phenomenon, the narrator, Ben, explained the situation as follows:

Most of us boys kept a smarting hurt beneath our brown skin, a personal tragedy of the war zealously kept, as we walked the streets of the big cities of America, seemingly gay, and uncaring; eager for friendship, grateful for the kind word, the understanding look, the touch of love. (44)

In spite of the pain, the boys simply kept a happy face, jovially through the night.

Using Block Quotations of Dialogue: Only use quotation marks around block quotations if you are quoting actual dialogue.

"I've seen the children of some of the boys by their American wives and the boys are tall, taller than the father, and very good looking." (Santos 24)

Paraphrasing: Even if you are not directly quoting from the text, but you want to use the author's ideas to make a point, especially when you want to condense several sentences into one of your own.

When Fabia and Ben meet, Fabia asks if the Pilipina women were still nice, modest, have long hair, dress proper are religious and faithful (Santos 23).

Punctuation: Refer to pages 57-58 in your reader for the complete list of guidelines for punctuating quotations. Here are a few other things to remember:

1. If the quotation ends with a period, and you are still in the middle of your sentence, you can either eliminate the punctuation until you get to the end of the sentence or use a comma instead:

They were all young and beautiful, their "teeth sparkling as they laughed, their eyes disappearing in mere slits of light" (119), overwhelming Fil with memories of his homeland.

2. Use square brackets whenever you need to substitute or add words to a quotation. If you're substituting a word, remember to take out the word(s) you're replacing so that the sentence remains grammatically correct.

Back in his room, Ben feels "as if someone [he] knew had died and in the darkness [he] was missing him" (37).

3. Single quotation marks are placed inside regular quotation marks when you have a quote within a quote.

Ben remembers that fateful evening quite well: "It was the same night I met Celestino Fabia, 'just a Filipino farmer' as he called himself, who had a farm about thirty miles east of Kalamazoo" (Santos 21).