

# HELPFUL HINTS WHEN USING QUOTATIONS IN ESSAY WRITING

In general, avoid leaving quotes as sentences unto themselves. Even if you have provided some context for the quote, a quote standing alone can disrupt your flow or seem out of place or unnecessary.

There are several ways to incorporate a quote more smoothly.

## 1) Lead into the quote with a colon.

Hamlet denies Rosencrantz's claim that thwarted ambition caused his depression: "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space" (*Hamlet* 2.2).

The colon announces that a quote will follow to provide evidence for the sentence's claim.

## 2) Introduce or conclude the quote by attributing it to the speaker. If your attribution precedes the quote, you will need to use a comma after the verb.

Hamlet denies Rosencrantz's claim that thwarted ambition caused his depression. He states, "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space" (*Hamlet* 2.2).

When faced with a twelve-foot mountain troll, Ron gathers his courage, shouting, "*Wingardium Leviosa!*" (Rowling, p. 176).

The Pirate King sees an element of regality in their impoverished and dishonest life. "It is, it is a glorious thing/To be a pirate king," he declares (*Pirates of Penzance*, 1983).

## 3) Interrupt the quote with an attribution to the speaker. Again, you will need to use a comma after the verb, as well as a comma leading into the attribution.

"There is nothing either good or bad," Hamlet argues, "but thinking makes it so" (*Hamlet* 2.2).

"And death shall be no more," Donne writes, "Death thou shalt die" ("Death, Be Not Proud," l. 14).

## 4) Use the words of the quote grammatically within your own sentence.

When Hamlet tells Rosencrantz that he "could be bounded in a nutshell and count [him]self a king of infinite space" (*Hamlet* 2.2), he implies that thwarted ambition did not cause his depression.

Ultimately, death holds no power over Donne since in the afterlife, "death shall be no more" ("Death, Be Not Proud," l. 14).

Note that when you use "that" after the verb that introduces the quote, you no longer need a comma.

The Pirate King argues that "it is, it is a glorious thing/to be a pirate king" (*Pirates of Penzance*, 1983).