**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.” (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.” (2.2)

When faced with a twelve-foot mountain troll, Ron gathers his courage, shouting, “*Wingardium Leviosa!”* (page 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.” (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” (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)

**MORE HELPFUL HINTS**

**5.) Do not quote any more than is necessary; pick the “gold nugget” from the quote and just use that.** **Using only short phrases from the novels will keep you from making major grammatical errors. Also, including too much quoted material can take away from the points you are trying to make.**

The women decide that Mrs. Wright was going to “knot” her quilt. (page 144)

**6.) If what you are quoting is already in quotations (that is, dialogue), you must put double quotes around the main part and single quotes around the dialogue.**

Sammy begins to assert his independence when he says to Lengel, “ ‘I quit.’” (page 827)

**7.) Notice the punctuation marks that are used with quotations. The only two punctuation marks used to introduce quotations are a colon and a comma. A semicolon is never used.**

**8.) Question marks and exclamation points go outside the final quotation mark if the punctuation mark is part of your sentence—your question or your exclamation (“like this”?). Those marks go inside the final quotation marks if they are part of the original—the writer’s question or exclamation (“like this!”).**

**9.) If you need to omit any part of the quote , use ellipsis marks (. . .). Normally, you will use these when you omit a portion of the middle of the quote. Only use ellipses at the beginning or end of a quotation if the quote has the appearance of being a complete sentence.**

Sammy calls the woman a “witch … [who] if she’d been born at the right time, they would have burned her over in Salem.” (page 824)

Faulkner indicates a change will occur when he writes, “…soon there would be sun.” ( page 742)

**10.) It is acceptable in quotations to make editorial changes such as capitalization, verb tense, or clarification as long as the altered material is enclosed in brackets (that's brackets, not parentheses).**

Sammy calls the woman a “witch … [who] if she’d been born at the right time, they would have burned her over in Salem.” (page 824)

**11.) Always make sure it is clear why you’ve selected a quotation from the text. Explain its importance; do not just stick it in there without any type of commentary.**