**Italicize This!**

By Name Jeth Ilana
Writing Lab Director

**Book Titles**
- The Poet's Hall Anthology of African American Literature
- The Heaven of Mercury

**Movies**
- A Beautiful Mind

**Plays**
- A Streetcar Named Desire

**TV Programs**
- Law & Order

**Musicals**
- The Lion King

**Albums/CDs**
- The Songs of Life

**Newspapers**
- The New York Times

**Magazines**
- Good Housekeeping

**Paintings**
- The Mona Lisa

**Sculptures**
- Marble

**Ships**
- The Titanic

**Particular Aircraft**
- The Hindenburg
- Challenger

(Particular aircraft, not makers or types such as Piper or Boeing /B/)

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A word is dead when it is said some say.
I say,
It just begins to live
That day.

Emily Dickinson

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Novels, Prose, and Poetry, Oh My!

**Writing About Literature**
A Note from the Fringe
Chris Yow

You’re a freshman or a sophomore in your first real lit class (or a junior, senior, or grad who’s still struggling), and your instructor wants you to write about something you’ve read. Never mind that you have no idea what the work is trying to say, what could you possibly have to say about it? You know nothing about the era it was written in; you aren’t sure you have a firm grasp on how the works and gender relate to each other; you can’t see how a novel “A” can mean “a” or, thought Blake wrote just poems; you firmly believe (despite your own grammatical shortcomings) that Lewry and Joyce could use some pointers; you can’t even pronounce Middle English; and despite your instructor’s insistance to the contrary, Hurrton, Turner, and Shakespeare really are foreign languages. Somehow, that career in rocket science isn’t looking quite so daunting.

First of all—relax. Take a deep breath and pick up a pen and your text, not a piece of paper. Good writing comes from good reading, and to read well, you need to write on what you’re reading. The academic word for this activity is “marginalia,” so you can feel smart about it. Write questions and comments on anything that disturbs, confuses, or intrigues you in the text. Mark words that you don’t understand and look them up. Then re-read and write some more. Second—open your mouth in class. Discuss with your instructor and your classmates the things you’ve written in your marginalia. Don’t think you have to sound brilliant; you don’t. And don’t be afraid to ask a stupid question; there’s no such thing. Of course, take good notes in class and always, always expand your marginalia when your instructor points out key lines or passages. By now you should be getting a better grasp on comprehending the work you’re reading and on some of the issues that can be pulled from it. Third—go buy Prentice Hall’s Pocket Guide to Writing about Literature by Edward A. Shannon and read it and use it. It’s an invaluable source for the beginning and advanced student trying to write about literature. Fourth—write early. Give yourself time to let your printer or computer have a migraine, time to make some sloppy drafts, time to make revisions, and time to have your instructor or an experienced reader give you suggestions. Fifth—revise some more, edit for surface errors, cross your fingers, and turn your paper in. And when you get it back, no matter what the grade is, read your instructor’s comments and log them into your brain for future writing endeavors. The instructor hasn’t written the comments just to defend the grade he or she has given you.

As a tool to help you in this process, this special edition of The Write Advice includes some articles, pointers, and style guidelines to help you navigate your way through some of the pitfalls, danger zones, and headaches of writing about literature. As always, the Writing Lab is available for paper readings, and you can call or email our Grammar Hotline if you can’t figure out how to do a citation, where a question mark goes at the end of a quotation, or how to do anything else related to written or spoken English. So use your resources and common sense, and good luck. And forget about contemplating changing your major to something less risky and more concrete like neurosurgery or nuclear physics.

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**Those who write clearly have readers, those who write obscurely have commentators.**

Anonymous
Plague Words and Phrases
by Charles Darling, Professor of English, Capital Community College, Hartford, CT
www.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar

Avoid problems created by these words or phrases:

1. And also This construction is often redundant.
2. And/or Outside of the legal world, most of the time this construction is used, it is neither necessary nor logical. Try using one word or the other.
3. As to whether The single word whether will suffice.
4. Basically, essentially, totally These words seldom add anything useful to a sentence. Try the sentence without them, and, almost always, you will see the sentence improve.
5. Being that or being as These words are a nonstandard substitute for because. Being that Because I was the youngest child, I always wore hand-me-downs.
6. Considered to be Eliminate the to be and, unless it’s important who’s doing the considering, try to eliminate the entire phrase.
7. Due to the fact that Using this phrase is a sure sign that your sentence is in trouble. Did you mean because? Due to is acceptable after a linking verb (The team’s failure was due to illness among the stars); otherwise, avoid it.
8. Each and every One or the other, but not both.
9. Equally as Something can be equally important or so important as, but not equally as important.
10. Etc. This abbreviation often suggests a kind of laziness. It might be better to provide one more example, thereby suggesting that you could have written more, but chose not to.
11. He/she is a convention created to avoid gender bias in writing, but it doesn’t work very well, and it becomes downright ugly if it appears often. Use he or she or pluralize (where appropriate) so you can avoid the problem of the gender-specific pronoun altogether.
12. Firstly, secondly, thirdly, etc. Number things with just second, third, etc., and not with these adverbial forms.
13. Got Many writers regard got as an ugly word, and they have a point. If you can avoid it in writing, do so. I have got to must begin studying right away, I have got two pairs of sneakers.
14. Had ought or hadn’t ought. Eliminate the auxiliary had. You hadn’t ought not to pester your sister that way.
15. Interesting Use one of the least interesting words in English, the word you use to describe an ugly baby. If you show us why something is interesting, you’re doing your job.
16. In terms of See if you can eliminate this phrase.
17. Irregardless No one word will get you in trouble with the boss faster than this one.
18. Kind of or sort of. These are OK in informal situations, but in formal academic prose, substitute somewhat, rather or slightly. We were kind of rather pleased with the results.
19. Literally This word might be confused with literally, a seldom-used adverb relating to authors or scholars and their various professions. Usually, though, if you say it’s literally a jungle out there, you probably mean figuratively, but you’re probably better off without either word.
20. Lota or lots of In academic prose, avoid these colloquialisms when you can use many or much. Remember too that a lot of requires three words: He spent a lot of money (not plenty).
21. Just Use only when you need it, as in just the right amount.
22. Nature See if you can get rid of this word. Movies of a violent nature are probably just violent movies.
23. Necessarily It’s hard to imagine a situation that would necessitate the use of this word.
24. Or didn’t write would of should of could of when you meant would have, should have, could have.
25. On account of Use because instead.
26. Only Look out for placement. Don’t write He only kicked that ball ten yards when you mean He kicked that ball only ten yards.
27. Orientate The new students became oriented, not orientated. The same thing applies to administrate — we administer a project.
28. Per Use according to instead. We did it per your instructions. Naah. This word is used frequently in legal language and in technical specifications, where it seems to be necessary and acceptable.
29. Plus Don’t use this word as a conjunction. Use and instead.
30. Point in time Forget it! At this point or at this time or now will win the job.
31. Previous as in our previous discussion. Use earlier or nothing at all.
32. So as to Usually, a simple to will do.
33. Suppose to, use to. The hard "a" sound in supposed to and used to disappears in pronunciation, but it shouldn’t disappear in spelling. "We used to do that" or "We were supposed to do it this way."
34. The reason why is because. Deja vu all over again!
35. Thru This nonstandard spelling of through should not be used in academic prose.
36. 'Til Don’t use this word instead of until or till even in bad poetry.
37. Try and Don’t try and do something. Try to do something.
38. Thusly Use thus or therefore instead.
39. Utilize Don’t use this word where use would suffice. (Same goes for utilization.)
40. Very, really, quite (and other intensifiers) Like basically, these words seldom add anything useful. Try the sentence without them and see if it improves.

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Introductory Verbs for Quotations
by Carol Rose

When you’re incorporating quoted material into your text from another source, try to get away from the stereotyped verbs says, writes, thinks, or feels.

The citation leading up to a quotation represents an important link between your thoughts and those of your source. The introductory verb can tell your reader something about your reasons for presenting the quotation and its context in the work that you’re taking it from. Try these verbs below to create some new and interesting possibilities:

acknowledges
acknowledged
conducts
endorses
points out
adds
confirms
establishes
proposes
admits
contents
explains
reasons
agrees
continues
finds
refutes
argues
denies
declares
grants
responds
asserts
denies
implies
states
believes
discourages
insists
suggests
claims
disputes
maintains
compares
emphasizes
notes

The following are examples of ways to vary introductory verbs:

In the words of Herbert Terrace, “...”
As E. D. Chan has noted, “...”
The Gardners, Wharton’s neighbors, report that “...”
“...” claims Noam Chomsky.
Psychologist H. S. Terrace offers an odd argument for this view: “...”
Terrace answers these objections with the following analysis: “...”

Verbs that suggest you agree with your source include the following: agrees
Verbs that suggest you disagree with your source include the following: disputes
Judy Young's Style Sheet
Adapted from Dr. Mary Lowe-Evans' Stylistic Pointers

1. Start early. Finish a rough draft early. Allow time to test your product on an educated reader who can tell you what's confusing, missing, or just plain wrong.

2. Anchor your arguments and assumptions in the text you are critiquing; that is, use quotation and paraphrase from the text as evidence to support your claims.

3. The first time you mention a critic's or author's work, give him or her full name and the full title of the work; subsequently, use the critic's or author's last name only and possibly a shortened title if you are referring to more than one work by the same author.

4. Use an appropriate verb to introduce a quotation. Here are a few possibilities: asserts, argues, contends, points out, observes, notes, indicates, questions, doubts, claims. Seldom does a critic, an author, or even a character simply say or state anything.

5. Have your grammar handbook, dictionary, thesaurus, and this style sheet handy as you edit and revise. There's no need to constantly check these resources while you're drafting, but they should all be involved in your revision process.

6. For recounting or describing events or characters in a work of fiction, use present tense.

7. Avoid using vague words and phrases such as "many" or "good." Be specific.

8. Avoid using pronouns such as "this," "that," "these," "which," or "these" without adding a noun.

9. Avoid using the passive voice.

10. Avoid using present progressive tense: "Joyce is suggesting that . . . ."

11. Do not use second person pronouns, except when quoting.

12. Use first person pronouns sparingly.

13. Make sure you load your reader from one idea to another by way of strategically placed transitional words, sentences, or paragraphs. Your reader should read carefully everything you put on the page, but she can't read your mind.

14. From time to time, remind your reader of how a particular point you are making relates back to and advances your thesis.

15. Collapse prepositional phrases into adjectives and adverbs. For example, prefer "the green-haired creature" to "the creature with green hair."

16. Do not use the same descriptive term more than twice on a page and rarely (usually for effect) in adjoining sentences.

17. Combine short, choppy sentences into longer, more sophisticated sentences by using subordinate clauses. Choppy: "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle believed that the fairy photographs were genuine. He was the same author who had created the ultra-logically detectable, Sherlock Holmes. Revised: "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the same author who had created the ultra-logically detectable character, Sherlock Holmes, believed that the fairy photographs were genuine."

18. Revise your work. Revise again. Edit for errors. Take a long last look. Then turn it in.

YOU CAN QUOTE ME ON THIS!
by Mamie Webb Hixson
Writing Lab Director

Use quotation marks to set off the following:

- Titles of Poems
- Titles of Newspaper/Magazine Articles
- Chapters in a Book
- Titles of Essays
- Titles of Songs
- Episodes of a TV/Radio Program
- Titles of Speeches
- Dialogue

Intentional Slang

Words Used for Emphasis

Words Used in a Special Sense

Words Used as Words

Quotation Marks with Other Punctuation Marks

Place the following punctuation marks inside closing quotation marks:

COMMAS

PERIODS

Place the following punctuation marks outside closing quotation marks:

SEMICOLONs

COLONS

The Literary Critic's 10 Commandments of Formal Writing
by Chris Yow

1. Thou shalt not steal other writers' words, thoughts, or ideas by not correctly citing sources.

2. Thou shall not splice two sentences with commas, dangling modifiers, use restrictive pronoun vaguely, or perform any other egregious acts of violence against grammar.

3. Thou shalt not use clichés, idiomatic expressions, or loft, ambiguous, confusing language.

4. Thou shall not use quotations at the beginning or end of paragraphs or in introductions or conclusions.

5. Thou shalt not ask the reader questions.

6. Thou shalt not use contractions.

7. Thou shalt not use you, I, or we.

8. Thou shalt not curtail with weak thesis statements, weak topic sentences, or passive voice constructions.

9. Thou shalt not use metaphorical: too many semicolons, colons, dashes, or parentheses.

10. Thou shall not use the MLA Handbook in vain.
OFF THE SHELF

Kenneth Koch
Henry James
Gormac McCarthy
Kathy Acker

Topics in Poetry (LIT 5037)
Connie de Launay-Hammon
Richard Hedeberg
Andre Rouss
Fernando Pessoa
Frank O'Hara
John Ashbery
Bernadette Mayer
Harry Mathews

20th Century Brit Lit (ENL 4273)
Martin Amis
Mary Burt
Angela Carter
Ivy Compton-Burnett
Malcolm Lowry
Moore Loy
Iain Newton
Jennette Winterson
Virginia Woolf

Feminist Lit Theory (LIT 4385)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Kate Chopin
Alice Walker

Great Books I (LIT 1110)
Homer
Homer
Aeschylus
Sophocles
Euripides
Anaxagora
Herodotus
Thucydides
Plato
Plato

Black Woman Writers (AML 3624)
Harriet C. Wilson
Zora Neale Hurston
Paula Marshall
Alice Walker
Ntozake Shange

Teal Morrison
Gloria Naylor
Bebe Moore Campbell

Black Woman Writers – Book Clubs
Dorothy West
Edwidge Danticat
Veronica Chambers
Pearl Cleage
Pamela Thomas Graham
Nella Larsen
Gloria Naylor
Terry McMillan
Alice Randall

On the Great Atlantic Railway
The Bestwoman
Rond Mundian
Great Expectations
Maldoror
Don Almarrac
Mad Love
Selected Poems
Drowned Flowers
Collected Poems
Chinese Whispers
Midwinter Day
Ulysses Compendium
London Fields
From Alice to Chimney-Piece
Burning the Boat
Manservant and Maidervant
Under the Volcano
The Lost Luner Backover
Tombstone State
Seeing the Cherry
Orlando
The Yellow Wallpaper
The Awakening
The Color Purple
The Iliad of Homer
The Odyssey of Homer
The Orestie
Sophocles III
Euripides IV
Lysistrata
The Iliad
The Iliad of Homer
The Iliad
Western
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Brown Girl, Brownstones
The Third Life of Orange Candel
The Iliad
when the rainbow is thin
Song of Solomon
Mama Day
Heat Blues Ain’t Like Mine

The following are some faculty reading lists for lit classes when they are offered. Note that book lists may vary depending on the instructor.

FACULTY READING LISTS

American Lit II (AML 2020)

Donna Leon
det Williams
Philip Whalen

Selected Poems
Collected Poems, Vol. I
Overtime

Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!
Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!

Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!
Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!

Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!
Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!

Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!
Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!

Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!
Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!

Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!
Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!
OFF THE SHELF

Faculty Reading Lists continued

African-American Literature (AML 3990)
Slave Narratives by Selected Authors, including Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs
Ralph Ellison
Booker T. Washington
W.E.B. Du Bois
James Weldon Johnson
Richard Wright
Ann Perry
James Baldwin
Maiya Angelou
Lorraine Hansberry
August Wilson
Zora Neale Hurston

American Literature
Katn Chopin
William Faulkner
F. Scott Fitzgerald
Zora Neale Hurston
Thomas Wolfe
Don DeLillo
Art Spiegelman
Joy Kogawa
Irom Morrisian
Tim O'Reiin

Edgar Allan Poe
Herman Melville
Ken Kesey
William Faulkner
Frank Norris
Edith Wharton
John Steinbeck

Emily Dickinson
W. D. Howells
Rainer Maria
Henry James
Ambrose Bierce
Stephen Crane
Jack London
T.S. Eliot
Eugene O'Neill
Tennessee Williams
William Faulkner
John Steinbeck
Robert Frost
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Arthur Miller
Ernest Hemingway
Mark Twain
Kate Chopin
Flannery O'Connor
Alice Walker
John Updike

Langston Hughes
Sylvia Plath
Bernhard Malamud
Eudora Welty
Selected Poems
Selected Poems
"Jewbird"
"A Worn Path"

Fiction and Film
Henry James, The Turn of the Screw
F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby
Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness
Francis Ford Coppola, Apocalypse Now
Jack Clayton, The Great Gatsby
The Innocents
"The Book of Matthew"
The New Testament
Henzig, "Agreta: The Wrath of God"

Intro to Literature (LIT2112)
Sources: The Norton Introduction to Literature, Shorter 8th Edition

Short Stories:
M. Amskin, "Happy Endings," 90
C. A. F. C., "The Cask of Amontillado," 70
D. Lessing, "Our Friend Judy," 142
A. Stein, "A Pair of Tickets," 188
N. Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," 189
R. Kipling, "The Management of Grief," 224
Louise Erdrick, "Love Medicine," 257

Poetry
M. Poche, "Barbie Doll," 619
T. Haray, "The Ruined Maid," 639
A. Louie, "Hanging Fire," 666
C. Brooks, "We Real Cool," 656
J. L'Occa, "Cherryh JR., 663
W. de la Mora, "Slim, Cunning Hands," 696
W. Blake, "The Sick Rose," 735
U. Cham, "The Word Plum, 743
S. Coleridge, "Tintern Abbey," 750
Anon., "The Yenge Maidens of Riga," 751
A. Melmer, "The Goose Fish," 773
C. McRea, "The White House," 799
Il Cham, "Joy Summit in a Random Universe," 803
D. Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle... 805
E.E. Cummings, "Buffalo Bill's, 810
E.E. Cummings, "[Ea]," 819
G. Herbert, "Easter Wings," 823
Boswell, "This Read," 880
[Old Perch] poems, 881
B. Deutsch, "The Falling Flower," 882
Anon., "Western Wind," 817
H. Frost, "Design," 822

Drama:
S. Glaspell, "Trifles," 865
L. Hellman, "The Children's Hour," 1088-1078

Some books are to be trusted; others to be swallowed;
and some few to be chewed and digested.
- Francis Bacon
"Flash" Essays:
Writing Critical Response Paragraphs
by Chris Yow

Many instructors assign daily critical response paragraphs to ensure that students are reading the assigned texts and to help students think critically about the texts they are reading. These paragraphs do not summarize the text or evaluate whether or not you like the text. They are persuasive analyses, arguments, or interpretations that not only help you think critically about the text you read but also help you formulate ideas that can be expanded into longer essays.

Think of your paragraph as a mini essay of seven to ten sentences. Obviously, you need to get into your argument quickly and get out before you get too broad in your discussion. In this kind of "flash" essay, you really have time to do is state your argument, supply evidence for it, interpret the evidence, and provide a concluding statement. The first sentence, then, acts as your introduction and thesis statement. State the topic of the work you are discussing and the author's name, and state precisely and concisely what you are going to argue, prove, or analyze about the text. Don't state the obvious: you're not writing a plot summary, so don't begin with a topic sentence that's a factual or obvious statement. The statement must be arguable for you to be able to engage the text. Most instructors provide a list of questions to write about, which is great for creating thesis statements. If you can create a one-sentence answer to a question, you've probably created a thesis statement. After you've established your argument, go through the text and write down or mark passages that support your claims. Of these passages, choose one or two that most clearly support your argument. Paraphrase or quote these passages as evidence to support your argument. Remember to introduce them, stating where they occur or who says them, and interpret them, explaining the passages' relevance to your argument or how they prove your argument. End your paragraph with a strong concluding statement; don't allow your paragraph to peter out at the end. Your concluding statement should be a strong sentence that restates your topic sentence and brings all of your thoughts together into a final comment about the text.

Apply the "So What? Test" to each step in your writing process. Read your thesis, your evidence, your interpretation, your conclusion, and ask yourself: "So what?" If you can't think of a response, then what you've written has not been properly developed, and you will need to revise it. Don't lose points for poor housekeeping: always proofread, edit, and revise to avoid silly mistakes, awkward sentences, and poor grammar. They not only cost you points, but also detract from the authority you are trying to create in your response. Critical response paragraphs may seem tedious, but they prepare you for intelligent discussions about the texts. Help you learn to read critically, give you practice at formal analytical writing, and give you a head start when it comes time to write a larger essay.

WRITING ABOUT FICTION

1. Decide what aspect of the fictional work you're going to write about: symbolism, recurring motif, specific theme, a character or characters, etc.
2. Read the work with this aspect in mind.
3. Look for specific quotations to incorporate into your argument.
4. Generate a thesis based on the aspect that you're interested in. (Ex. In The Third Life of Grange Copeland, Alice Walker uses the South as a symbol of the oppression of the novel's principal characters.)
5. Introduce the thesis in the first paragraph.
6. If your thesis is simple, ensure that it is clear and specific.
7. If your thesis is complex, ensure that its components are specified and explained.
8. Address one idea per paragraph.
9. Include appropriate comments. (Limit your quotes to less than one-third of the body of the paper.)
10. Interpret every example you give.
11. Ensure, for the benefit of the reader, that your examples are referenced clearly.
12. Use only the most significant examples.
13. Plan before you write.

Quoting Prose
by Chris Yow

According to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers by Joseph Gibaldi, All examples are from The Third Life of Grange Copeland by Alice Walker

Quotations in your paper provide evidence that you need to support your thesis statement. Follow these guidelines when quoting material from a literary text.

- Always document the source you are quoting by using parenthetical documentation. Parenthetical documentation includes the author's last name and the page number(s) the material is quoted from. In a short quotation, use quotation marks to enclose the quoted material. Parenthetical documentation goes at the end of the sentence containing the quote and is placed outside the quotation marks. If you cite the author and page number in the sentence containing the quotation, then the parenthetical citation is not necessary.

"Brownfield knew this movement well; it was the fatal shrug." On page 17, Walker writes, "Brownfield knew this movement well; it was the fatal shrug."

- Short quotations can be incorporated into your paper a number of ways. One way is to simply quote the author's words exactly as written and connect them to your own statement with a colon or a comma. Another way to use a short quotation is to integrate the author's words into your own sentence.

Brownfield recognized his father's lack of compassion: "While his son watched, Grange lifted his shoulders and let them fall" (Walker 17).

The author reveals Grange's lack of compassion when she writes, "While his son watched, Grange lifted his shoulders and let them fall." (Walker 17).

Brownfield's father "lifted his shoulders and let them fall," revealing his lack of compassion (Walker 17).

- For long quotations (quotations larger than four lines), you will need to use a block quote. Usually, a colon introduces the quote. The block quote should be double spaced and indented one inch (1 0 spaces) from the left margin. Do not use quotation marks, and do not indent the first line more than two spaces. Use an ellipsis mark (three spaced periods) to indicate words or sentences left out. Parenthetical documentation follows the last line of the quoted excerpt and is outside of the sentence.

Grange's lack of compassion is apparent when Grange and Brownfield are looking at their house:

Grange stood with an arm across the small of his back, soldier fashion, and with the other hand made gestures toward this and that of the house, as if pointing out necessary repairs. They were very many ... While his son watched, Grange lifted his shoulders and let them fall. Brownfield knew this movement well; it was the fatal shrug. It meant his father saw nothing about the house that he could change and would therefore give up gesturing about it and he would never again think of repairing it. (Walker 18 17)

If you use a quote, it should be introduced and explained or interpreted. Remember that the quotation itself does not stand alone as evidence for your thesis statement. You must interpret it in relation to the point you are trying to make. If you use a long quotation, it should be followed by an equally long and detailed explanation or interpretation. Don't use long quotations as a means to lengthen your paper. Usually, use one or two quotations per paragraph are all you need to give you plenty to write about. Avoid filling your paper with too many quotations. Stay focused. Remember that you can also paraphrase instead of quoting directly. When quoting or paraphrasing, always remember to remain fair to the author. Do not use statements out of context or omissions that will cause a misreading or misunderstanding of the meaning of the original passage.
Quoting Poetry

by Amy Chawars

According to the MLA Handbook

- When using quotations from poetry in your own writing, make sure you use quotation marks to frame the work being quoted.

Bradtstreet frames the poem with a sense of morality: "All things within this fading world hath end." (1).

- If you are quoting two or three consecutive lines of poetry, you should separate each line with a slash mark (/).

Collen concludes, "Of all the things that happened here/That's all that I remember." (11-19).

- Please note the spacing around the slash mark. The MLA Handbook shows spaces on both sides of the slash mark.

- Notice in the examples that the line numbers are put in parentheses directly following the closing quotation mark. The word "line" or an "l" is not necessary: simply put the number(s) of the corresponding line(s) from the text being quoted. Also notice that the period is placed after the closing parenthesis. If you are quoting a line of poetry that ends in a question mark, the punctuation will go inside the quotation mark, and a period will still follow the closing parenthesis.

"What need you? To follow in a house where twice as many/Have a command to tend you?" (4-5).

- Quotations of 4 or more lines of poetry should begin on a new line, be indented 1.5 spaces from the left margin, be double spaced, not have quotation marks, have a period (or ending punctuation mark) after the final word of the quoted poetry, before the parenthesis with the page number.

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" is rich in evocative detail:

It was winter. It got dark
early. The waiting room
was full of grown-up people,
artists and overcoats,
lanterns and magazines. (8-10)

- When quoting a poem with unusual spacing or special arrangements, reproduce the lines as accurately as possible.

c. cummings concludes the poem with this vivid description of a carefree scene, reinforced by the carefree form of the lines themselves:

it's

spring

and

the

giant

balloon

bellows

whistles

far

and

wides (16-24)

- If you are quoting a piece of a poem that begins in the middle of a line, the partial line should be positioned where it is in the original text and should not be shifted to the left margin.

In a poem about Thomas Hardy ("T.H."). Molly Holden recalls her encounter with a "young dog tax" one morning:

I remember

she glanced at me in just that way, independent and unabashed, the handsome riding look that went round and about but never directly met my eyes, for that would betray his smell.

He was not being shy, only careful. (38-43)

Writing About Poetry

Dr. Bill Freind

To write well about poetry one needs to read well. Here are a few tips for reading poems that will help to make the process of reading and writing a little easier.

- Read the poem at least five times. There's no way to understand a good poem after only one or two hasty readings.
- Annotate as you read. Underline, comment, write questions in the margins of your book.
- Use a dictionary to look up words you don't know. If the poem has footnotes or endnotes, be sure to read them.
- Remember that poetry comes not only from the literal meaning of the words, but also from their sound. Pay attention to how the poem's music—its rhyme, rhythm, assonance and consonance—contributes to the mood or meaning of the poem.

Don't expect your reader to accept a piece of writing you wouldn't accept yourself.

Donald H. Ross

That's not writing, that's typing.

Truman Capote

Organization Topics for a Poetry Paper

Adapted from Dr. Pierre Kaufke's Outline for a Poetry Paper

Introduction
What background information do you know about the poet or poem?

Defining the speaker
Who is the speaker?
What information do you have about the author?
Does defining the speaker shed any light on any of the elements in the poem?

Defining the situation and the setting
Do the time and place of the poem's action link to the poem contextually?

Defining structure
What is the external structure of the poem: form, rhyme scheme, pattern, appearance?
What is the poem's internal structure: content, plot, story? Is it dramatic or narrative?
Is there a twist?
How do the internal and external structures interrelate?

Defining language
What is the meter or rhythm? What are their effects?
What metaphors, similes, symbols, or allusions are used? What are their effects?
How does the poem sound? What are the effects of the sound?

Conclusion
Can you summarize the poem?
Can you make a connection to it personally or universally?
SAMPLE "WORKS CITED" ENTRIES
By Stephen F. Willoughby

The Modern Language Association (MLA) requires that researchers, or authors, "generously acknowledge their debts to predecessors by carefully documenting each source, so that earlier contributions receive appropriate credit." [142]. It is customary to provide this information on what is called a Work(s) Cited page. The Work(s) Cited page is the last numbered page of the research paper—the Work(s) Cited page IS A SEPARATE PAGE. At the top and centered, write "Works Cited" if you are using more than one source and "Work Cited" if you use only one. Lines are double-spaced throughout. For additional information, consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th ed., or visit the Writing Lab (Bldg. 51, Rm. 157).

Follow the stipulated MLA format.

A NOVEL

Author's Name. Title of Novel. City, State: Publisher, copyright date.


A WORK IN AN ANTHOLOGY

Author's Name. Title of Work. Title of Anthology. Name(s) of Editor(s). City, State: Publisher, Copyright Date. Pages of Selection.


A JOURNAL

Author's Name. "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume Number (Year): Pages of Selection.


A JOURNAL ARTICLE FROM AN ONLINE SOURCE

Author's Name. "Title of Article." Title of Journal Volume or Issue Number (Year): Pages. Name of Database. Date of Access <website>.


THE BIBLE

Name of the Bible, Editor(s). City, State of Publication: Publisher, Copyright Date.


WORK CITED


PRESENT TENSE AND LITERATURE

From Real Good Grammar, Top by Mamie Webb Hixon

Use the present tense to discuss the contents of a literary work, even though the work was, of course, written in the past and even though the author may have used past tense throughout the work. It is said that the information about characters in literature exists in what is called the "eternal present," since for every new reader, for example, "Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison charts his journey... and Willy Loman is the tragic hero.

Willy Loman is the hero in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. He is the quintessential American man, whose seemingly petty failures are raised to the level of tragedy.

When discussing the facts of the writing and publication of a literary work, use the past tense. Historical information about the author should also be expressed in the past tense. Information about the work itself and other historical facts are usually expressed in present tense. Current facts about living authors should be expressed in the present tense too.

Edgar Allan Poe became famous with his publication of the poem "The Raven."

The novelist Willa Cather grew up in Nebraska, and the prairie country is the setting for many of her works.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a New Englander and a writer of short stories and novels. Among his works are The House of Seven Gables and his masterpiece The Scarlet Letter.

Toni Morrison received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993 and is the first African American to receive this award. (The present tense is used to indicate the historical present.)