

Top 6 Rules of Thumb for using quotes in your literary analysis essay

1. **Quote the Good Stuff.** Beware of using quotations that do not mean anything or do not add substance to your essay.
If a source says something so well that you couldn't possibly change it, use it!
If a source backs up a point you made, use it!
If you *understand* what a source is saying, use it! You will have to analyze it later, so understanding it will help you.
2. **Avoid Over-quoting.** Remember "less is more." Do not pad your essay with other people's ideas.
3. **Keep Quotations Short.** Keep your quotations short by use a few key words/phrases.
4. **Copy Quotations Correctly.** Misspellings and use of incorrect grammar when it's obvious that the source couldn't have made those mistakes affects your own credibility as a writer. Accuracy indicates care for one's work.
5. **Do Not Start a Paragraph with a Quotation.** A paragraph should begin with your ideas. The first sentence of a paragraph is known as the *topic sentence* or *assertion*, both of which support the focus of the essay. In turn, the quotation supports the topic sentence.
6. **Do Not End a Paragraph with a Quotation.**
Always conclude the paragraph with *your ideas*. The last sentence should be part of your analysis of the quotation.