

Incorporating Quotations

Format for short quotations

Quotations fewer than four lines long are usually incorporated into your own sentences and paragraphs without the need for separate formatting.

The main character in Joanne Greenberg's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* says: "We lived simple lives. We lived good lives. We lived in dignity" (28).

In addition to using a colon or a comma to separate the quotation from your writing, you can often incorporate a short quotation directly into your own sentence.

The main character in Joanne Greenberg's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* believes that she and her friends "lived simple lives" (28).

Notice that the period goes **after** the closing parenthetical mark while the closing quotation marks go **before** the parentheses.

In the opening paragraph of *Lord of the Flies*, Golding hints that the island setting will not be a paradise: "All round him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat" (7).

OR

In the opening paragraph of *Lord of the Flies*, Golding hints that the island setting will not be a paradise. Ralph "clamber[ed]* heavily among the creepers and broken trunks" and then a red bird "flashed upwards with a witch-like cry" (7).

Avoid introducing a quotation with:

On page 18 it says: "....."

The author says "....."

The book says "....."

Here's a common formatting **error to avoid**:

In the book *I Never Promised You A Rose Garden*, it states that ". . ." (20).

Taking out the "in" and the "it" makes this much smoother.

The book *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* states that ". . ." (20).

When you incorporate a quotation into your own text this way, be sure that the signal phrase and the quotation make a complete and coherent sentence.

- **Develop the use of fragments of quotes in your writing. One or two words incorporated from the text gives credibility to your argument:**

In the opening paragraph of *Lord of the Flies*, Golding hints that the island setting will not be a paradise. The jungle is described as a "bath of heat", with a "long scar smashed" through the "creeper and broken trunks ; a vivid "red and yellow" bird gives a "witch-like cry" which is "echoed by another" (7).

Remember to maintain verb tense (I prefer **simple present tense**, or **past tense** if your book is written in past tense) and **verb agreement** (between the parts of the quote and the rest of the sentence and write in third person (he, she they, we etc.)

Format for long quotations

Quotations that are longer than four lines of text should be block-quoted. That means they should be indented two tabs from the left margin. Here's an example:

According to Harris and Platzner, ancient Greek temples were different from modern houses of worship:

A Greek temple, such as the Parthenon, was literally the house of the god it sheltered, a holy place, where a supernatural power could reside among human beings. In contrast to modern churches, synagogues, and mosques, the temple was not intended to hold a congregation. (9)

Notice that:

- the parenthetical citation goes after the final period of a blocked quotation
- no quotation marks are used around a blocked quotation

Quotations from poetry and song lyrics

When you are quoting poetry, it's important to identify where each line ends. If you are including a short quotation within your sentence, use a slash (/) to indicate where a line breaks:

In his misery, King Lear exclaims, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is/ To have a thankless child" (King Lear III.iii. 23-24).

Notice that in addition to using the slash to show the line break, the first word of the new line is capitalized because it is traditionally capitalized in poetry.

If you want to quote more than four lines of a poem or song lyrics, block-quote the lines and cite them as you would for prose with one exception: retain the original line endings in the blocked quotation.

Robert Frost's poem "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" conveys the speaker's weariness:

The only other sounds the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go, before I sleep.
And miles to go, before I sleep. (44)