

# Using Quotations

*A little dab'll do ya*

# General Guidelines

1. Your words need to be the majority of your essay. Quotes should support your ideas; your writing should not simply link quotes together. Make a point and use quotes as evidence.
2. Never begin a paragraph with a quote. Start with a topic sentence that is in your voice only.
3. Use part of a quote in your own original sentence in order to support your claim.
4. Always cite the quote (page number if one work, author name and page number if more than one).
5. Follow with at least two sentences that support your topic sentence. This is where you explain how the quote supports your thinking and where you “drive home” the argument.
6. End each paragraph with a concluding sentence that clearly depicts where you stand.

# Quote sparingly and correctly: The vast majority of your essay must be YOUR writing

**NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!**

In *Fahrenheit 451*, Guy Montague likes fire. “It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history” (3). This shows that he likes fire.

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## Problems:

- Copying errors
- Too much quotation, not enough original writing

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In *Fahrenheit 451*, Guy Montag likes fire. “It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and *changed*” (3). **He is mentally engulfed in and mesmerized by the flames and their power to transform whatever they touch.**

# Don't stack quotes

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“Well, I’d say it really got started around about a thing called the Civil War” (54). “School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored” (55). This is how things got to be the way they are in the novel.

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In an effort to encourage Montag to get out of bed and get back to work, Beatty give him a little pep talk. “Well, I’d say it really got started around about a thing called the Civil War” (54), Beatty states as he begins explaining how society became the way it is. He goes on to explain how even what children were taught in schools was diminished and simplified. “School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored” (55). His lengthy explanation shows that the shift from reading, learning, books, and thinking was extremely gradual.

# Introduce and incorporate quotations smoothly

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Indicate omitted portions of quotations with an ellipsis:...

- Maintain the original meaning and intent
- Maintain grammatical integrity
- Abbreviated quotation must make sense

**NEVER** use ellipses to piece together any meaning you want.



# Indicate omitted portions of quotations with an ellipsis:

## Original:

“‘Millie!’ he said. ‘Listen. Give me a second, will you? We can’t do anything. We can’t burn these. I want to look at them, at least look at them once. Then if what the Captain says is true, we’ll burn them together. You must help me.’ He looked down into her face and took hold of her chin and held her firmly. He was looking not only at her, but for himself and what he must do, in her face. “Whether we like this or not, we’re in it. I’ve never asked for much from you in all these years, but I ask it now, I plead for it. We’ve got to start somewhere here, figuring out why we’re in such a mess, you and the medicine nights, and the car, and me and my work. We’re heading right for the cliff, Millie. God, I don’t want to go over” (66).

## WRONG!

Montag selfishly implores Millie to allow him to kill himself. “‘Millie!...We’re heading right for the cliff.... [and] I...want to go over” (66). Montag is clearly suicidal, which is why he stole the books in the first place.

## WRONG!

“‘Millie!....you and the medicine nights, and the car, and me and my work.” Montag is obviously very desperate to get Millie to listen to him.

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When Millie found the books Montag had hidden, he was desperate to keep her from destroying them. “‘Millie!... Listen....We can’t burn these. I want to...at least look at them once. Then if what the Captain says is true, we’ll burn them together....I’ve never asked for much from you in all these years, but I ask it now, I plead for it. We’ve got to start...figuring out why we’re in such a mess, you and the medicine nights, and the car, and me and my work. We’re heading right for the cliff, Millie. God, I don’t want to go over’” (66). Montag pleads with Millie to work with him, to read the books and learn from them in the hopes of improving their lives. He is no longer happy to just accept the status quo and he wants Mildred to share his curiosity.

# Indicate changed portions of a quotation with brackets: [he] (not parenthesis ())

When Millie found the books Montag had hidden, he was desperate to keep her from destroying them. “Millie!... Listen....We can’t burn these. I want to...at least look at them once. **Then if** what the Captain says is true, we’ll burn **them** together....I’ve never asked for much from you in all these years, but I ask it now, I plead for it. We’ve got to start...figuring out why we’re in such a mess, you and the medicine nights, and the car, and me and my work. We’re heading right for the cliff, Millie. God, I don’t want to go over”(66). Montag pleads with Millie to work with him, to read the books and learn from them in the hopes of improving their lives. He is no longer happy to just accept the status quo and he wants Mildred to share his curiosity.

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# Practice

Using the passage to the right, write a paragraph in which you:

- Introduce a quotation and explain its significance
- Fit the quotation smoothly into the paragraph
- Correctly use an ellipsis
- Correctly modify the quotation
- Correctly cite the page number

You may be asked to share your paragraph with the class.

“I’m antisocial, they say. I don’t mix. It’s so strange. I’m very social indeed. It all depends on what you mean by social, doesn’t it? Social to me means talking to you about things like this.” She rattled some chestnuts that had fallen off the tree in the front yard. “Or talking about how strange the world is. Being with people is nice. But I don’t think it’s social to get a bunch of people together and then not let them talk, do you? An hour of TV class, an hour of basketball or baseball or running, another hour of transcription history or painting pictures, and more sports, but do you know, we never ask questions, or at least most don’t; they just run the answers to you, bing, bing, bing, and us sitting there for four more hours of film teacher. That’s not social to me at all. It’s a lot of funnels and a lot of water poured down the spout and out the bottom, and then telling us it’s wine when it’s not” (29-30).