Guidelines for Using TEXTUAL EVIDENCE in a Literary Argument

Quote from the text

when the author’s word choice is important.

when you are making a very specific point about the text.

Use paraphrase or summary.

when you are referring to a general fact about the novel.

when you simply need to refer to the plotline.

Quote extensively (a block quotation—more than three lines) ONLY

when the quotation is crucial, perhaps central, to your argument and will lose its effect if paraphrased.

when you have a great deal to analyze in the quotation.

when you are writing a relatively long paper (perhaps over six pages).

Introducing Quoted Material into Your Prose

Always remember to

transition smoothly and grammatically from your prose to the quotation;

connect the quotation to your prose using a colon or comma, not a semicolon or period;

punctuate correctly: place periods and commas inside quotation marks, semicolons, colons, question marks, exclamation points, and page numbers outside:

Even after she finally finds her true love, she defines herself by the actions of a man: “Once upon a time, Ah never ‘spected nothin’ . . . But you come ‘long and made somethin’ outa me” (167).