



Integrating Quotes into an Essay

Things to ask yourself when you're choosing a quote:

- Does it have relevance to the point I'm making in the paragraph? (Yes!)
- Will it help the reader understand my point more clearly? (Yes!)
- Am I trying to use the author's words to get my own point across? (Yes and No)

This answer might be yes and no because while the author phrases what you want to say in an efficient or eloquent way, you don't want the quote to replace your own analysis or "speak for itself" but instead use it to support the overall point that you are trying to make. Don't let the quote stand alone. It needs to be supported by your analysis.

Introducing quotes:

Even though you don't have to go into great detail about the background of the quote, you should give some context so that your reader understands the analysis at hand.

Explaining your quote:

Number one rule to remember: don't put your quote in the paragraph and expect it to make magic for your argument. It needs to be cultivated and explained in order for it to mean anything to your reader.

Incorrect: "Similarly, Black Angelenos did not automatically gravitate toward other people of color. This was perhaps most evident in the uneven relations between Japanese and African Americans, who often lived in close proximity." African Americans and Japanese Americans did not get along and there was miscommunication.

What is wrong here?

- No in-depth introduction explanation, or citation of quote
- Assumption that the reader already knows what the quote is trying to say
- Explanation is not accurate or is too simplistic

Correct: To demonstrate the complex inter-ethnic relationships, Pulido states, "Similarly, Black Angelenos did not automatically gravitate toward other people of color. This was perhaps most evident in the uneven relations between Japanese and African Americans, who often lived in close proximity" (57). This argument describes how there was not always a cohesive community between people of color. Despite the fact that Japanese Americans and African Americans may have been living in the same geographical location, it did not mean that they had mutual understandings of each other.

What is right here?

- Introduction and explanation of quote and use of author and citation
- Makes a substantial analytic point regarding the quote and is useful to the reader

Remember to be very conscious of the argument you are making. Make sure you ask yourself "why do I need this quote?" If you have a good reason, chances are you have a good analysis in mind.