

USING QUOTES AND PARAPHRASES IN LITERATURE PAPERS

Paraphrase:

Put page numbers for paraphrases of details, no page numbers for paraphrases of summaries of larger events in the text:

When Oberon explains to Puck the origin of the love potion, he tells him that Cupid's arrow was originally intended for Queen Elizabeth, but she escaped and the arrow pierced a flower instead (203).

When Oedipus delivered the city of Thebes from the Sphinx, the citizens were so grateful that they made him their king.

Paraphrase Containing Short Quotes:

This should be your main method of integrating textual evidence. For versed speech, put slashes to indicate the end of the line (applies to Sophocles and Shakespeare: his aristocrats speak in metered verse, but not his commoners – unless they are speaking as characters in their play, “Pyramus and Thisby.”

When Teiresias reluctantly comes before Oedipus, the king greets him with reverence, calling him a “holy prophet / In whom, alone of all men, truth was born” (46). The priest quickly becomes “a wicked old man” (47) when he refuses to speak, and when he finally does reveal the truth, Oedipus heaps insult upon insult on him, calling him a “sightless, witless, senseless, mad old man,” “a decrepit fortune-teller,” and a “prophet fraud” (47).

Sentence-Long Quote:

You preface the quotation by a detailed explanation of the point the quote supports. Put a colon between your “point” and the quote:

Ever mischievous, Puck delights in the trouble he has caused the young lovers and looks forward to witnessing the climax of all the confusion: “Shall we their fond pageant see? / Lord, what fools these mortals be!” (211)

Split Quote:

This is your best option for quotations that are two sentences long because it breaks up the monotony of a too-long quote:

“I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance,” Lady Bracknell tells Jack as she interviews him as a potential candidate for her daughter's hand. “Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone” (442).

INTEGRATION OF TEXTUAL EVIDENCE: SAMPLE

QUOTES:

“I would not have you speak through messengers, / And therefore I have come myself to hear you – “ (43).

“I know that you are deathly sick; and yet, / Sick as you are, not one is as sick as I. / Each of you suffers in himself alone / His anguish, not another’s; but my spirit / Groans for the city, for myself, for you.” (44)

“Speak to them all, / It is for them I suffer, more than for myself.” (44)

I make this proclamation to all Thebans: / . . . I solemnly forbid the people of this country, / Where power and throne are mine, ever to receive that man / Or speak to him, no matter who he is . . .” (46)

TEIR: “Rage as you please.”

OED: “Rage? Why not? And I’ll tell you what I think: / You planned it, you had it done, you all but / Killed him with your own hands: if you had eyes, / I’d say the crime was yours, and yours alone.” (48)

“Ugly in yielding, as you were ugly in rage! / Natures like yours chiefly torment themselves.”

CHO: “The tyrant is a child of Pride / Who drinks from his great sickening cup / Recklessness and vanity, / Until from his high crest headlong / He plummets to the dust of hope.” (55)

QUOTES INTEGRATED INTO A PARAGRAPH

Oedipus has great leadership skills—and he likes to perform as a great leader in front of his people. However, when people tell him things he does not like to hear, we discover that he is very much a self-serving tyrant whose pride and vanity leads to his destruction. When Oedipus delivered the city of Thebes from the Sphinx, the citizens were so grateful that they made him their king. Years later, the Thebans still hold their king in high regard, who, for them, is “the man surest in mortal ways / And wisest in the ways of God” (43). When another plague holds sway over their country, they turn to him for help. He has already sent Kreon to the oracle to find out what is to be done about the problem and summoned Teiresias, the blind prophet, two actions that show he is very concerned about his people. Yet, he takes this opportunity to grandstand as the great king before his people: “I would not speak through messengers, / And therefore I have come myself to hear you – / I, Oedipus, who bears the famous name” (43). “I know that you are deathly sick,” he tells them a few minutes later, “and yet, / Sick as you are, not one is as sick as I. / Each of you suffers in himself alone / His anguish, not another’s; but my spirit / Groans for the city, for myself, for you.” (44). After Kreon has delivered Apollo’s message that the city needs to find and expel the murderer of Laios, Oedipus goes one further and proclaims that anybody who shields or helps the guilty man will be severely punished. The Thebans immediately offer to help in the investigation and suggest that Oedipus talk to Teiresias. In his encounter with Teiresias, we begin to see the flip-side of the great king’s character: When the prophet tells him things he does not like to hear, he flies into a rage and accuses Teiresias of committing the crime himself. “And I’ll tell you what I think:” he hurls at the old man, “You planned it, you had it done, you all but / Killed him with your own hands: if you had eyes, / I’d say the crime was yours, and yours alone.” (48). Kreon, similarly accused of treason, sums up Oedipus’ character when he describes him as “ugly in yielding, as [he is] ugly in rage.” Natures like Oedipus’, he concludes, “chiefly torment themselves” (53). The Thebans, albeit amongst themselves, criticize their king’s arrogance: they call him a “tyrant” possessed by “recklessness and vanity” and predict his tragic end (55).

Comment [E1]: This is the topic sentence that sums up the major point of this paragraph.

Comment [E2]: This is a paraphrase. No page reference necessary because the paraphrase concerns an important part of the story, not some little detail.

Comment [E3]: This is a short quote integrated into a paraphrase.

Comment [E4]: Here is a sentence-long quote that follows a careful explanation of what I want the quote to illustrate. Note the colon between my interpretation and the quote.

Comment [E5]: Here I split a long quote and mention the speaker in between the two parts of the quote.

Comment [E6]: Here I my paraphrased textual evidence follows a brief point about Oedipus’ desire to do more than he was charged to do.

Comment [E7]: Here I use the split quote again.

Comment [E8]: I had to change the pronoun and the tense in order to make the grammar of the quote fit the grammar or my sentence.

Comment [E9]: The last two sentences demonstrate the technique of integrating a series of short quotes into a longer paraphrase.