EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS INTO YOUR LITERARY ANALYSIS

PART 1: CRITICAL THINKING

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Part 1  Critical Thinking: Considering the Purpose, Selection, and Placement of Quotations

Characteristics of Critical Thinkers

1. Critical thinkers are flexible—they can tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty.
2. Critical thinkers identify inherent biases and assumptions.
3. Critical thinkers maintain an air of skepticism.
4. Critical thinkers separate facts from opinions.
5. Critical thinkers don’t oversimplify.
7. Critical thinkers examine available evidence before drawing conclusions.

(Smith, 1995)
Integrating quotations takes thought and thoughtfulness, or critical thinking.

Keep in mind the purpose of quotations in literary analysis is to provide evidence for your ideas and argument.
Critical Thinking: Avoid Dropped-in Quotations

Dropped-in quotations (also called “floating quotations”) occur when quotations are dropped in without any thought in terms of how they fit in the paragraph or sentence, often signaled by the use of a period (.) or semicolon (;) at the end of the sentence right before the quotation.

Dropped in quotations are confusing and counterproductive.

Dropped-in quotations have the potential to become even more serious when the sources they come from are not correctly identified; the result is plagiarism.
Critical Thinking: Selecting Meaningful Quotations

Effective integration begins with thoughtful selection of quotations.

Choose quotations that help support and deepen understanding of your analysis of the text.

Choose quotations that leave room for and even necessitate your interpretation and explanation of them.

Typically, you can recognize effective quotations because they show rather than tell, and they add or add to ideas rather than merely repeat the same ideas.
Critical Thinking: Effective Placement of Quotations

Careful placement of quotations is also important.

Again, keep in mind the purpose of quotations is to provide evidence for your ideas and argument, so place quotations where the evidence for your ideas belongs:

- in body paragraphs
- in step 2 of body paragraphs
Critical Thinking: Effective Placement of Quotations
Continued

Most likely, the earliest in the paragraph you would place a quotation would be in the third sentence.

**Avoid beginning a body paragraph with a direct quotation.** This placement does not make the focus or argument of the paragraph clear and results in a dropped-in quotation.

**Avoid ending a body paragraph with a direct quotation.** This placement does not allow for necessary contextualization, interpretation, or analysis of the quotation and again results in a dropped-in quotation.
Quotations are typically details. They suggest or show rather than explicitly state the idea, so they are usually placed after and in relation to an example, which serves as a bridge between the reason and the detail.

Take a look at the sample body paragraph on the next slide. The first sentence is the reason (supporting argument). Notice that the first quotation isn’t presented until the 4th sentence.
Without a doubt, the ending of “The Lottery” paints a clear picture of human brutality. The act of stoning is itself violent, a killing that is enacted up close in which the killer sees and is seen by the victim. In addition, the horror and brutality are heightened by the fact that the ritual requires the participation of the entire village, including children and even the family members of the victim, not just in the selection process but in the killing as well. No one, except the victim, is exempt from this violence, or blameless for it, as the story illustrates early on by having “[t]he children assemble[] first [as a matter] of course” (Jackson 963), echoed at the end when “someone gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles” (969). The diminutive phrase “little Davy Hutchinson” is transformed with the addition of “a few pebbles” so that in this context it no longer evokes innocence but culpability, showing us how the community teaches their traditions to the next generation, thus perpetuating those traditions and making sure everyone is equally guilty. The final image of the story is of the village as a mob, descending on Tessie Hutchinson. Notably absent is any sort of metaphor; the villagers are not compared to beasts or monsters. Instead, they are described simply, straight-forwardly as collectively “remember[ing] to use stones” though other parts of the ritual have been forgotten, urging each other on, making choices that reflect individual abilities and tendencies, such as the number and size of stones to use (639), behaviors that are all inescapably human. The savagery, too, then must be recognized and condemned as human.