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

PART 2: INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS

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PART 2 Integrating Quotations: Signal Phrases, Attributive Tags, and Interpretation & Analysis
Integrating Quotations: The Steps

When integrating quotations, follow the 4 steps below every time:

1. Signal phrase
2. Quotation
3. In-Text Citation
4. Explanation (Interpretation & Analysis)
Introducing Quotations with Signal Phrases & Attributive Tags: Definitions

A signal phrase introduces or integrates a quotation. A signal phrase before a quotation can prompt your reader to notice what you want him/her to in or about the quotation and can also help focus your interpretation and explanation of the quotation afterwards. Thus the signal phrase helps create a bridge between the quotation and the reason the quotation is meant to prove.

Some signal phrases identify the source, its author, title, context or background; this type of signal phrase is generally called an attributive tag or attribution. Attribution is important in literary analysis to make clear that the argument, ideas, and evidence come from the text.

Other than the first time you introduce the author, refer to him or her by his or her last name only (never by his or her first name only). On the other hand, you may refer to characters by first names only.

Context literally refers to what’s around a quotation—the words, images, sentences, ideas, etc.—as well as information about the quotation's physical location in the text (where it is and what it's near), the perspective (whose words or beliefs it reflects), situations or circumstances around the quotation, the work as a whole, including the author, time period, publication, etc.
Examples of Signal Phrases and Attributive Tags

Robert Burns claimed in 1784 in his poem "Man Was Made to Mourn: A Dirge" that (mostly an Attributive Tag identifying the author, poem, some context—i.e., the date—though the use of the verb “claimed” identifies Burns’ purpose, which goes beyond attribution.)

No one, except the victim, is exempt from this violence, or blameless for it, as the story illustrates early on by (Signal Phrase indicating who is involved and giving context about where in the story the quotation is located; it does also attribute the content to the story)

echoed at the end when (Attributive Tag giving context but also hinting at the text’s purpose or emphasis)

the villagers are described simply, straight-forwardly as (Signal Phrase indicating the purpose of the quotation to describe the villagers as well as characterizing the description itself)

The opening paragraph of "The Lottery" with its matter-of-fact description of the village sets this mood of politeness: (Attributive Tag identifying the story and context but mostly a Signal Phrase identifying the writer’s interpretation of the quotation)

Tessie, in turn, responds light-heartedly with a joke: (Attributive Tag identifying the context/perspective—who is speaking—but also a Signal Phrase indicating how to interpret the quotation—as a joke)
**Interpretation** explains the meaning of a text or passage, not just translating what it means, which is paraphrasing, but explaining how/why it means what it does.

**Analysis** is related to interpretation in that it explains how a text or passage works, focusing on breaking the passage down and looking at how the parts work in style, form, and structure and how these parts contribute to and reveal the meaning, effect, and/or purpose.

**Explication** is an extended process of interpreting and analyzing a longer passage of text, piece by piece, to uncover its significance. As with any interpretation or analysis it can be focused on specific elements related to a particular reason or purpose.
Explanation of Quotations

Explanation of the quotation is the most important step in integrating quotations and the one which involves the most critical thinking.

This step typically follows the quotation though may start in the same sentence in which you introduce or integrate the quotation.

In this step, you interpret the meaning and analyze the style and/or form or structure of the quotation to point out how it proves and develops the reason. That is, you explain what in and/or about the quotation proves the reason, how or why it does, and also what the quotation adds to our understanding of the reason. Keep in mind you are trying to get the reader to notice something they might not if you didn't point it out: your thinking about the quotation.
Do not begin your explanation by stating "this quotation," which focuses on the entire quotation and doesn't make clear what specifically you mean to discuss.

Instead, introduce the first detail in or about the quotation that helps prove the reason.

So you might interpret the meaning and effect of a particular word or phrase or image, etc., and/or you might analyze an element of style, such as a pattern of sound created by the repetition of a particular letter, and/or you might analyze the form or structure, for example, the length or type of sentences used.