

Task: The 5-Step Approach to Incorporating Quoted Material

Situation: This is a task to use during a writing session, with a client who has come in with a draft that requires revision. Recommended for use with clients whose work shows minimal processing of quoted material.

Instructions: Ask the client to produce a full paragraph, using a passage that has been incorporated into the draft, and consisting only of that passage and the work produced following the 5 steps. For the last step, you can suggest that the client reflect by connecting the work done with the quote to the thesis or main idea of the draft. Time: 10 minutes or so; it's not necessary that the client completely finish the paragraph, but you should talk about anything left undone because the client did not understand, or found it too difficult.

Outcome: Not only a clearer understanding of what needs to be done with quoted material, but also a clearer sense of the amount of time and attention that needs to be devoted to quoted material as evidence. And, of course, the client may take the work home to include in the revised draft.

1. The first time you bring a writer's words into your own text, introduce the quote with a **signal phrase**. This should always include the full name¹ of the person who wrote the words, as well as the full title of the work from which the quote is taken. The most efficient way to do this is as follows:

Wilbur Smith, in his essay, "The Enduring Tradition," writes, "...

Never do it this way:

In Wilbur Smith's essay, "The Enduring Tradition," he writes, "...

because it's inefficient (requires both the writer's name and a pronoun).

2. If there is any **context** that the reader will need in order to understand the quote, it is your responsibility to provide it. You should not assume a reader who knows the quoted text as well as you do, and doing the work to contextualize the quote will prepare you to decide what you want to say about it (see below). Context may come before the signal phrase, or after the quote, but it should not be far from the actual quote in either direction. For example:

Wilbur Smith, in his essay, "The Enduring Tradition," writes, "in those days education was primarily religious" (196). Smith is talking about Europe in the Middle Ages, when practically all formal schooling was sponsored by the Catholic Church. What this means is that . . .

3. After the quote you need to do some first-order interpretation, also known as **sayback**. This is nothing more than a thoughtful restatement of the idea contained in the words you have quoted. Your aim should be to add value to the reader's understanding of the quote, rather than to give an exact paraphrase. For example:

Not:

What this means is that in that time most teaching was related to religion

But rather:

What this means is that the information students were given was filtered through their teachers' religious outlook on the world

4. After the sayback, you need to do some further **analysis**. Reach into the quote to pull out (i.e., analyze) a word or phrase, then do some specific interpretation of it. Like so:

Smith's use of the word, "primarily," is interesting because it shows he recognizes that even an organization as powerful and dedicated as the Church was at that time could not completely control education . . .

5. Finally, after the analysis, it is necessary to do some connecting **reflection**, bringing your work on the quote into line with the flow of your argument.

Regardless of whether it is sponsored by religious or secular institutions, true education resists conformity to a specific set of cultural values.

¹ further references to the same name should ONLY make use of the last name. Never refer to a writer or artist by his or her first name, regardless of how familiar you may feel yourself with that person's work.