



Using Quotations as Evidence in Your Essays

KS4 ENGLISH LITERATURE

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 3 min read

What Are Quotations as Evidence?

A **quotation** is an exact phrase or sentence taken directly from a text, like a book, poem, or play. When you write an essay about literature, quotations act like proof or evidence for the ideas you're trying to explain. Instead of just saying "the character was sad," you can show your reader exactly what the author wrote that demonstrates this.

Using quotations makes your essay much stronger because you're backing up your arguments with the actual words from the text. It shows your teacher that you've read carefully and understood the material.

Think of it like this: if you say your friend is funny, that's just your opinion. But if you tell someone exactly what joke your friend told you, they can see for themselves why they're funny. Quotations work the same way in essays!

How to Use Quotations Effectively

The best quotations are **short and precise**—usually just one or two sentences, never a whole paragraph. You should choose quotes that directly support the point you're making in that paragraph.

Always introduce your quotation before you include it. Don't just drop a quote into your essay with no explanation. Say something like: "As the author shows..." or "The character reveals..." before you give the quotation.

After the quotation, you must explain what it means and why it matters to your argument. This is called **analysis**. Don't assume your reader understands why you chose that quote—tell them!

Think of it like making a sandwich: the quotation is the filling, but the bread around it (your introduction and explanation) makes it complete and easier to digest.

Putting It All Together

Here's the formula: **Introduction + Quotation + Analysis = Strong Evidence.**

For example: "The author reveals the character's loneliness through the line, 'She sat alone in the empty room.' This suggests she feels isolated and cut off from others." The sentence before the quote introduces it, the quote itself provides evidence, and the sentence after explains its meaning.

Remember to use quotation marks (" ") around the exact words from the text, and include the **page number** in brackets, like this: (p. 45). This is called **referencing**, and it shows where your evidence came from.

Using quotations properly transforms your essay from simple opinions into powerful arguments supported by real textual evidence. That's what makes the difference between a good essay and a great one!