*Using Quotations*

To discuss a work of literature in a convincing way, you must use quotations from the text that you are studying to support your ideas about the text. The best way to use quotations is the "three part method":

\[
\text{ASSERTION} \rightarrow \text{QUOTATION} \rightarrow \text{EXPLANATION}
\]

(idea you want to support)

(explanation of how the quotation supports the assertion)

Let's look at each of these three steps one at a time.

1. **An Assertion** is any idea that needs to be proven before someone will believe it. When you are discussing a story, an assertion is one of the key ideas about the story that you want to convince your reader to accept. Since this assertion is one of the key ideas you are trying to prove, it usually works as the topic sentence or one of the major supports of your paragraph.

2. **Quotation:** You don't need a quotation to support a simple fact that nobody will question. For example, if it's clear that the story takes place at night or that the name of the main character is Sam, there is no need for you to prove these facts with a quotation. Instead, you need quotations to convince your reader to accept debatable ideas or interpretations, the assertions that we have just discussed.

   Be stingy with the length of your quotations. Use just the key words or sentences that you really need in order to support your idea. When you have found the quotation that you want to use, you can't just toss it into your paper; you have to remind your reader of the context of the quotation – who says it and what's happening when it is spoken. This information that helps to introduce the quotation smoothly is called a **LEAD-IN**.

3. The **EXPLANATION** is the most important part of the process of using quotations. Here's where you explain exactly how your quotation supports your assertion. After you have thought carefully about the story that you are studying, the connection between the quotation and the assertion probably seems obvious to you. However, you have to put yourself in your reader's shoes and remember that he has not studied your topic as carefully as you have. He needs this explanation. It doesn't do any good to paraphrase or summarize the quotation. You really have to explain how it supports the assertion. As you explain, it is often helpful to highlight and "requote" a particular word or phrase in order to comment on its special significance.
LITERARY ANALYSIS

Basic to literary analysis is the following three-step method:

- **ASSERTION** - a statement that requires some kind of support. They appear at various levels in a paper - as thesis, topic sentence, major support

- **EXAMPLE** - a direct quote, a paraphrase, a direct reference to the work being analyzed

- **EXPLANATION** - a phrase, clause, or sentence(s) that explains the relationship between the assertion and the example; it clarifies how the example actually "proves" the assertion. DO NOT JUST RESTATE WHAT A QUOTATION SAYS; THE READER CAN READ - HE WANTS TO BE SHOWN THE RELEVANCE OF WHAT HE HAS READ, WHY YOU USED IT.

Example -

The trainer makes outrageous errors in diction. He describes Magrew as "holdin' the midget in the crouch of his arms like a football" (p. 511), and he says that Whitney Cott "crotches down in what was prob'ly the most fearsome stanch in baseball" (p. 517). Not only his reversal of the words "crotch" and "crouch" but his choice of "fearsome stanch" lend humor to the story.

Example -

Harold Krebs, the returned veteran in Ernest Hemingway's short story "Soldier's Home," is almost totally lethargic, passively hoping for "his life to go smoothly;" he feels isolated, cut off somehow from civilian life. Krebs does show a passing interest in the young girls of the town, but he "did not feel the energy or the courage" to deal with them directly. The narrator tells us that "When he was in town, their appeal to him was not very strong." From that comment, we can assume that the more available the girls are, the less interest Krebs has; he merely likes to "look at them from the front porch as they walked on the other side of the street." The isolation Krebs feels is evident especially in his conversation with his mother. To his mother's dismay, Krebs maintains that he is not in God's kingdom; he then goes on to answer "NO" to her question, "Don't you love your mother, dear boy?" Kreb's answer does not indicate a rejection of his mother personally. Rather he is rejecting God, his parents, and all of the society which Krebs finds so alien, so "complicated." Only with his younger sister, Helen, does he seem at ease; perhaps because she asks him no complicated questions. With her, he does not need to tell all the lies he feels he must tell everyone else in order to measure up to their expectations.