Sample I - The quotations are too long and not useful. They decorate instead of document. Try to quote crucial lines whose words strikingly illustrate your ideas. Think of proper proportion. Here there is too much quotation in proportion to the writer’s own words.

Tom Wingfield escapes reality in two obvious ways. First, Tom is always going to the movies.

"Listen! You think I’m crazy about the warehouse?...You think I want to spend fifty-five years down there...I get up. I go! Why listen, if self is what I thought of, mother, I’d be where he is -- gone!" Tom yelled.

"Where are you going?" Amanda said.

"I’m going to the movies!" Tom announced.

It is evident here that whenever a conflict arises Tom goes to the movies. Also Tom begins to smoke whenever Amanda starts finding fault with Petty habits of Tom.

"I haven’t enjoyed one bit of this dinner because of your constant directions on how to eat it," Tom snapped.

"Temperament like a Metropolitan star! You’re not excused from the table," Amanda said.

"I’m getting a cigarette," Tom said.

It is apparent that Tom cannot handle conflict whenever or wherever it is. He always needs someplace or something to let him slip away.

Sample II - Excellent use of well-chosen short quotations integrated into the writer’s own sentences. Strong detail.

The most obvious character who makes up a world of illusion to escape reality is Laura. Laura’s "glass menagerie" seems to "take up a good deal of time" which in effect hurts her. Her fascination with glass, and the still life, has taken the place of the enjoyments she would feel with different, moving, alive people. Laura acts like this because of "a lack of self-confidence," as Jim points out. She is so afraid of being rejected or made fun of by other people that she secludes herself from the real world and plays with glass animals. She would rather "visit the penguins every day" than go to a business college at which she is embarrassed because she threw up on the floor. Laura is so shy and introverted that she worries too much about what other people will think about her. Laura also seems to want to forget the present and live in the past. She takes out her high school yearbook and sits for hours paging through it. She can remember every little detail like "We sat across the aisle from each other Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays" that Jim cannot remember later in the play. Even though this is six years ago she can remember who she sat by and on what days, which indicates her fascination with the past and the world of make-believe and her ignorance towards the present and reality.
Sample III - Quotations are used mechanically to "fill slots" in the paragraph where the student thinks the teacher expects to see quotations. The result is mechanical and lifeless. Note the lack of explanations after quotations.

Tom escapes reality when he goes to the movies and writes poetry and his final escape is the merchant seaman. Tom goes to the movies to escape the reality of home: "All of those glamorous people -- having adventure -- hogging it all...," When he goes to work he writes poetry to escape the reality that he is in a horrible job just to support his family: "Retiring to a cabinet of the washroom to work on poems when business was slack in the warehouse." Finally, he wants to escape his whole miserable situation. He wants to join the Merchant Seamen and see the world. He is willing to strand his family with nothing.

Remember:

1. Use lead-ins to establish the context of quotations and the speaker.

2. Use explanations after most quotations to explain how the quotation supports your main idea.

3. Make sure that quotations fit naturally in your sentence.

4. Don't use lead-ins like "This quotation proves that..." Just state what it proves or illustrates.