

Quotations

Frame, Explain, and Connect—The Cure for Dropped Quotations

Use quotations sparingly to support your own ideas. Avoid “dropping” quotations into your writing.

A Dropped Quotation

In college my greatest fear was Speech Communication 1. The thought of speaking in front of my peers made my heart burn, my head swim, and my hands sweat. I didn't always have a fear of public speaking. Delivering the weekly 10-minute speech in 6th grade was relatively painless. Why then was I so anxious about making speeches in college? “We can recall, through our incredible memories, the original symbolic sense of vulnerability in childhood and suffer the feelings attached to it” (qtd. in Fowler and Aaron 695).

Fowler, H. Ramsey, and Jane E. Aaron. *The Little, Brown Handbook*. 8th ed. New York: Longman, 2001. Print.

The quotation in the paragraph above has been dumped into the paragraph without any introduction or explanation. The reader has to interpret what is meant by the quotation and how it fits into the overall meaning of the paragraph.

A Revised Quotation

In college my greatest fear was Speech Communication 1. The thought of speaking in front of my peers made my heart burn, my head swim, and my hands sweat. I didn't always have a fear of public speaking. Delivering the weekly 10-minute speech in 6th grade was relatively painless. Why then was I so anxious about making speeches in college? Willard Gaylin, a practicing psychoanalyst, sheds light on the probable cause of my fear: “We can recall, through our incredible memories, the original symbolic sense of vulnerability in childhood and suffer the feelings attached to it” (qtd. in Fowler and Aaron 695). Looking back on my childhood, I remember a humiliating event that changed my attitude toward speechmaking.

Fowler, H. Ramsey, and Jane E. Aaron. *The Little, Brown Handbook*. 8th ed. New York: Longman, 2001. Print.

The significance and purpose of the quotation is clearer because of the underlined additions.

- The quotation is framed. The speaker and his credentials are identified.
- The quotation is explained. It “sheds light on the probable cause of the [writer’s] fear.”
- The quotation is connected. It relates back to the author’s “greatest fear,” the idea expressed in the topic sentence.

Incorporating Quotations

1. Introduce the Quotation
2. Explain the Quotation
3. Respond to the Quotation.

Templates for Introducing Quotations

X states, "_____."

As the world-famous scholar X explains it, "_____."

As claimed by X, "_____."

In her article _____, X suggests that "_____."

In X's perspective, "_____."

X concurs when she notes, "_____."

Verb options include: says, writes, accepts, criticizes, describes, disagrees, discusses, explains, identifies, insists, offers, points out, suggests, warns (PLEASE NOTE: PRESENT TENSE)

Templates for Explaining Quotations

In other words, X asserts _____.

In arguing this claim, X argues that _____.

X is insisting that _____.

What X really means is that _____.

The basis of X's argument is that _____.

Suggestions for Responding to Quotations

Respond to the quote you have introduced and explained. Familiar dialectical response options may apply. Further your explanation (when informing) and/or argument (when persuading) for your readers.

Connect – Make a connection to a point in your essay, an example you are providing, and/or another relevant idea. Possibly connect to another text, your life, the lives of others, and/or the world in some other way.

Reflect – Draw a conclusion about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work.

Evaluate - Make a judgment about what you just quoted and explained.