

A Level English Language

HOW TO USE QUOTATIONS

You all know that every valid point must be backed up with evidence. Most of the time, our evidence in English comes from the text we're studying. We *quote* it.

There are two basic types of quotation that the best essays use:

- **integrated** (the quotation forms part of your own sentence)
- **free-standing** (where it is a separate item, not forming part of your own sentence)

How *not* to quote

What you must *never* do is **strand** a quotation. This is when a quotation has been 'dumped' in a sentence – sometimes at the start, sometimes in the middle – with no consideration of whether it makes sense. See the examples below:

'Our school'. The use of the possessive determiner encourages us to share responsibility.



Bush makes use of religious language 'with the guidance of our Father' to show that he believes God is on his side.



How to do it properly

- **Integrated quotations**

This is when you make a quotation a part of your sentence so that your writing *flows*.

By using the possessive determiner in 'our school', the writer encourages us to share responsibility.



Bush uses religious language when he describes having 'the guidance of our Father' to show that he believes God is on his side.



Tips

- Keep your quotes *short*. They're there to back up your point – not replace it.
- If the integrated quote comes at the end of your sentence, put the final full stop outside the quotation – e.g. *Raworth's authoritative tone is reinforced when she informs us, in a simple declarative sentence, that the shirt suits our 'aesthetics'.*
- Use an **ellipsis** (...) to indicate where you've missed out words in a quote – e.g. *Raworth continues in this authoritative manner, asking us if we ever consider 'the ... effects' of our choices.*

- If a short quote doesn't fit the flow of your sentence, you might want to consider popping it into brackets – e.g. *Raworth makes use of a range of attributive evaluative adjectives ('selfish', 'cruel', 'mean-spirited') to shape the reader's negative response to the manufacturers.*

• Free-standing quotations

This is when you pop a quotation at the end of a point, usually after a colon.

Raworth encourages us to consider our own attitudes toward ethical clothing in a simple interrogative sentence: 'Does it fit your ethics?'



Petridis reinforces his message by concluding the article with a triad of abstract nouns: 'truth, beauty and freedom'.



Free-standing quotations don't get in the way of the flow of your sentence, but it's important to make sure that you still punctuate around them carefully.

Tips

- As always, *short* quotes are the best. Don't regurgitate the text: analyse it!
- Introduce a free-standing quotation with a colon.
- Don't forget to pop a full stop after your quotation and to use a capital letter at the start of your next sentence. (The exception to this rule is where your quotation ends with a question mark or an exclamation mark. In these cases, they act as full stops and so you don't need another one.)
- Do *not* continue your sentence after a free-standing quotation.

Be careful with your linguistic labels

- If you're applying a linguistic label to a quotation, make sure it's clear to the examiner what you're labelling. Take a look at the following sentence.

The attributive superlative adjective in 'the most amazing day of my life' implies that it was...

This is no good, as you haven't shown the examiner you understand that '*most amazing*' is the attributive superlative.

Solutions:

1. Underline the words to which you refer: *The attributive superlative adjective in 'the most amazing day of my life' implies...*
2. Quote only what you're referring to: *The use of the attributive superlative adjective 'most amazing' implies...*