Introducing & Blending Quotations

REVIEW: As you write, you will need to provide direct (word for word) evidence from the text to support your thesis. A quotation from the text should never appear on its own. It needs an introduction and it needs to flow smoothly within your essay.

A. Introduce the quotation with a complete sentence and a colon.

Notice how in the examples below, the essay writer makes his/her own assertion while introducing the quote. In the first example, the essay writer makes the assertion that the quote shows that the setting of the story is deceptive. In the second example, the essay writer makes a judgement as to the type of tribute the author gives.

The setting emphasizes deception: "Nothing is as it appears."

Fitzgerald gives Nick a muted tribute to the hero: “Gatsby turned out all right at the end”

B. Use an introductory or explanatory phrase, but not a complete sentence, separated from the quotation with a comma.

- You should use a comma to separate your own words from the quotation when your introductory or explanatory phrase ends with a VERB such as "says," "thinks," "believes," "pondered," "recalls," "questions," and "asks, etc."
- You should also use a comma when you introduce a quotation with a phrase such as "According to Dickinson."

Examples
In the text the author says, “Everyone in the village was waiting for reinforcements to arrive, but they never came.”

According to the author, “Mrs. Smith never apologized to Olivia.”

Thoreau suggests the consequences of making ourselves slaves to progress when he says, "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us."

Arendt remarks, “Even in the darkest of times, we have the right to expect some illumination.”

C. BLEND a quotation as part of your own sentence without any punctuation between your own words and the words you are quoting. It should flow and not sound awkward.

Examples

Scout begins the novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, by describing her own town of Maycomb as “an old town but a tired old town.”

In the story the author presents Rory as a person with “untapped creativity” that, once harnessed, will serve to embolden her “oppressed and marginalized” community to fight for freedom.

Directions: Answer these multiple choice questions. Please use the information from parts A, B, and C of the review to explain your answers when prompted.

1. Which punctuation marks can you use after your introductory phrase and before your quote?

   A. Comma  
   B. Period  
   C. Colon  
   D. Period and Colon  
   E. Colon and Comma

2. True or false: It's okay to drop in a quote all by itself, without any of your own words before.

   A. True  
   B. False

3. Does this work as a comma quote?
In his inaugural address, President Kennedy said, "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

A. Yes  
B. No

Explain:

4. Does this work as a comma quote?

When Romeo hears Juliet speaking in her room he says: "What light through yonder window breaks?"

A. Yes  
B. No

Explain:

5. Does this work as a blended quote?

Bradbury describes the T-Rex as having "skin like the mail of a terrible warrior" while its hands could "pick up and examine men like toys."

A. Yes  
B. No

Explain:

6. Does this work as a blended quote?

Mr. Radley is an unattractive man. “He was a thin, leathery man with colorless eyes, so colorless they did not reflect light.”

A. Yes  
B. No

Explain:

7. Does this work as a colon quote?

Steinbeck describes the setting to foreshadow the ending of the story: “Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Galibian mountains.”

A. Yes
8. Which is the correct punctuation of this quote?

Thoreau asks "If the bell rings, why should we run?"

A. Thoreau asks "If the bell rings, why should we run?" (no punctuation)
B. Thoreau asks, "If the bell rings, why should we run?"
C. Thoreau asks; "If the bell rings, why should we run?"
D. Thoreau asks: "If the bell rings, why should we run?"

9. Which is the correct punctuation of this quote?

Thoreau summarizes how he thinks we can improve our lives "Simplify, simplify."

A. Thoreau summarizes how he thinks we can improve our lives "Simplify, simplify." (no punctuation)
B. Thoreau summarizes how he thinks we can improve our lives, "Simplify, simplify."
C. Thoreau summarizes how he thinks we can improve our lives; "Simplify, simplify."
D. Thoreau summarizes how he thinks we can improve our lives: "Simplify, simplify."