**A Brief Guide to Introducing and Formatting Direct Quotations (Part 1)**

There are a few different methods writers can use direct quotations to provide examples in a literary analysis. UAIS requires that students practice and master the proper framing and documentation of direct quotations as part of a logical argument. The challenge facing young writers is that they must transition from their own words to the poet’s or author’s (the example from the analyzed text) and then back *again* to their own words multiple times in one response—all without creating confusion or choppiness.

As you are aware, an argument contains three parts: **Assertions** (topic sentences or thesis statements), **Examples** (evidence in the form of direct quotations from the literature itself), and **Explanations** (logical reasoning tying your examples to your assertion). It’s time to look more closely at examples. The use of examples in your writing contains the following requirements:

1. Because an example always follows either an assertion or the end of different explanation, a transition is typically necessary (One example, More importantly, However, Furthermore, Another example, etc.).
2. A clause or sentence that provides necessary context for the example you are going to include. In general, this tells us who is speaking (a character in a novel, perhaps) or who is writing (the author or poet). It also gives brief information on who, what, when, where, though it need not provide answers to all of these questions. In a short poem, the information needed is minimal because there is typically one speaker on one specific experience. In a novel where there are many characters and plot events, more context is needed to place the reader at the correct moment the writer is analyzing.
3. The correct subject and verb immediately introducing the direct quote. This is usually the character’s name (dialogue) or the poet’s/author’s last name (Hinton) if a character is not speaking. **The subject is NEVER “novel,” or “poem” or the worst offender, “The quote says….”** The correct verb is as follows:
   1. says = only if a character is speaking in open dialogue
   2. thinks/notes/observes = a character is narrating (no dialogue)
   3. writes = always okay with an author or poet
4. Following the direct quotation, the parenthetical documentation indicate the line numbers (poem), the page numbers (novel/story) or the act/scene/line numbers (a play).

I. USING FULL SENTENCES FOR EXAMPLES: Please highlight the assertion, example and explanation in different colors. Then, label the transition, the contextual clause, the device, and the parenthetical documentation:

In her novel *The Outsiders,* S.E. Hinton uses symbolism to characterize Dally as isolated and dangerous. One example of symbolism is when Ponyboy describes Dally as the truest member of the gang. He observes, “His eyes were blue, blazing ice, cold with a hatred of the whole world…He was tougher than the rest of us—tougher, colder, meaner” (10). Here, Hinton juxtaposes Dally’s eye color with the word hatred and the word meaner. While all of the members of the gang hold attributes of the color blue, the intensity of the color blue in this description is clearly the most intense with Dally. Hinton suggests that Dally’s hatred is deeper and more intense than any of the other gang members. Furthermore/However/More importantly…NEXT EXAMPLE OF SYMBOLISM…and so on….

MLA Formatting Rule #1: Remove periods and commas from the end of a direct quotation, placing a period *after* the parentheses. Use page numbers for stories/novels:

Correct: Melinda notes, “Facing it is impossible” (123).

Incorrect: Melinda notes, “Facing it is impossible.” (123).

MLA Formatting Rule #2: When quoting poetry, use forward-slash marks between lines and capitalize as the poem does, even mid-sentence. Use line numbers for parenthetical documentation:

Correct: Robert Frost writes, “Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,/And sorry I could not travel both” (1-2).

III. Grammatical Integrity

As with every other sentence in your analysis, the laws of grammar also apply to sentences in which you combine your words with a poet’s or author’s. I have seen many students blindly write context and direct quotations together forgetting that the sentence must also be complete—neither fragment nor run-on. Below are examples I typically see in early stages of ninth grade writing that are grammatically incorrect and therefore affect readability:

Example 1:

WRONG: Mali and Tony talk about death metaphorically. “Could you keep your sword right by your bed/so if you ever felt, like, ‘I think I might die lf old age!’/you could reach out and grab it? (46-48).

Here, the quotation stands by itself. There is no context. This student does not indicate who is speaking to whom.

RIGHT: Mali and Tony talk about death metaphorically. Tony asks Mr. Mali, “…could you keep your sword right by your bed/so if you ever felt, like, ‘I think I might die lf old age!’/you could reach out and grab it? (46-48).