

Using Quotations in Answering Questions

DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR USING QUOTES

A **source** is from written or spoken words from somebody beside yourself. Source are frequently used when we study some topic.

A **quotation** comes from the exact words spoken by somebody or written in a book or other source. **We use quotations when the original source is the best way to give the information you want to give to the reader.** Whenever you use the exact words of a source, you must put them in quotes.

WHEN TO USE QUOTES

Quotes are shown by the use of **quotation marks**. The quotation marks start before the exact words and end immediately afterwards. Often we start giving a quote by saying who it comes from. Here is an example

President Barack Obama said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

Barack Obama, Feb. 5, 2008

WHEN NOT TO USE QUOTES

Quotation are often overused, especially by students learning English and the academic culture of the United States. In many cultures, it is expected that students should take the exact words of a source and use them as a way to show respect for that source. In the US, we often use the ideas of others, but try to put them in our own words. We show respect for those sources by showing where we get the information, but **we try not to use quotes too much**. If we only use quotes or use quotes to make the main points in our writing, then it seems as if the writing is not our own, but that of the source. Quotes are used more for impact and for getting exactly the right statement when nothing else will do. **Use them, but don't overuse them.**

HOW USE QUOTES

It's important to set off quotes with quotation marks, " ". Quotes are usually introduced with a phrase such as, "He said, ,..." "She said, ..." "He added, ..." "She noted," All of these phrases are followed with a comma. You can practice the use of these quotation marks in SkillsTutor.

WHEN TO USE QUOTES WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN A DISCUSSION WEB

Punctuation and use of quotations in answering questions

Here is the first question in the discussion web about the Author's Note:

The author based the story of Rifka on one of her relative's stories. Describe that person. What did she look like? What was her personality like?

One answer to my first question:

The author based her book about her aunt Lucy. She looked like a tiny woman with unruly bun of snow-white hair on the top of her head. Her voice sounded strength, steadiness and humor. Her personality was like a cheerful and happy woman.

HERE'S A REVISION

The author based her book about her aunt Lucy, ¹ who ²“looked like a tiny woman with unruly bun of snow-white hair on the top of her head.” ³ (p. x) Her voice sounded of ⁴“strength, steadiness and humor.” ⁵Her personality was of a ⁶ ~~like a~~ cheerful and happy woman.

Note the changes:

1. I use an adjective clause starting with, “who”... The word “who” refers to Lucy. It replaces the word “she” which could be confusing and refer to either Lucy or the author.
2. I use the quotation mark here to show it is directly from the book. Since the first word continues the sentence that we have, I didn't capitalize the quotation.
3. This is the end of the quote so I used the ending quotation marks.
4. We start using a new quote from the book. This is similar to before.
5. This is the end of the quotation.
6. This is a good addition to the use of quotes. It's important for you to give your own insight and understanding in your answer to the question. I changed the wording, “like a” to “of like” as that is a more common way to make this comparison.

When you answer the questions in the discussion web or on the test, you may use quotes to support your answer, but follow the guidelines in this handout.