

Writing Skills

*The Literary Present, Effect Paragraphs,
and How to Integrate Quotes*

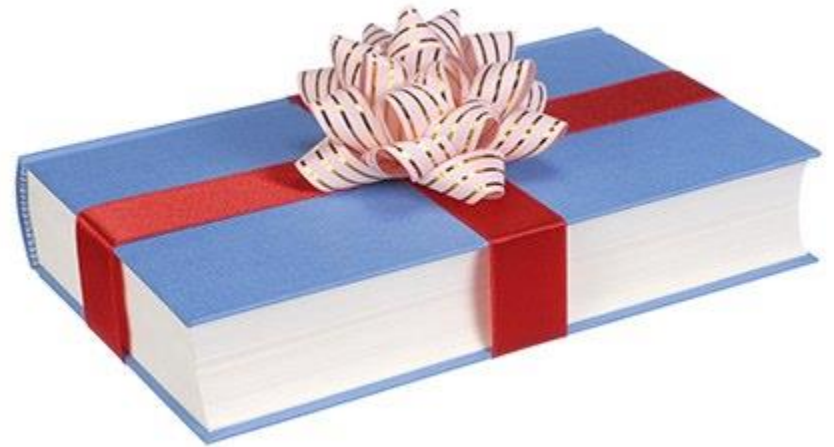
*"There is no great writing – only great rewriting."
– Louis Brandeis*

Sources:

The University Writing Center, Texas A&M University
Writing Studio, Vanderbilt University
Writing Center, University of Richmond
Writing Lab, Indian River State College

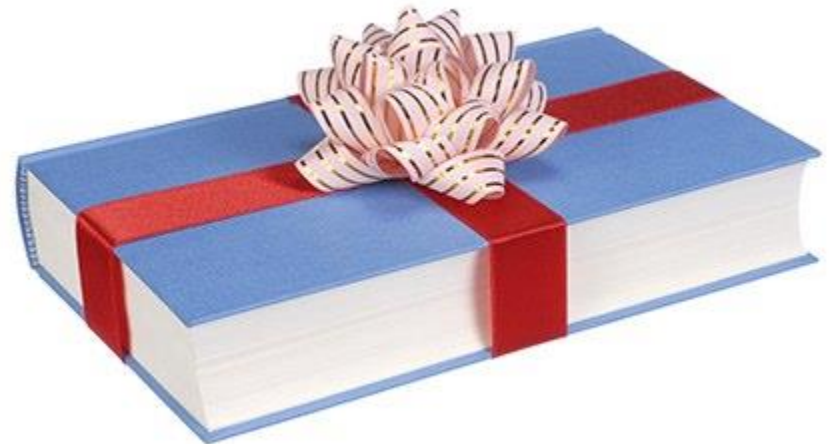
The Literary Present

- Use the present tense when writing about literature
 - Characters
 - Plot events
 - This also includes the Bible, artwork, and movies
- We write about literature as if the events in the book are happening now, even though the authors may be long dead.



The Literary Present: *Examples*

- At the end of *The Hobbit*, Bilbo **returns** to his home and **becomes** the master of two worlds.
- In *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth **manipulates** her husband into killing Duncan. She **exploits** his ambition and **uses** it to achieve her own goals.



Writing Effective Paragraphs

Paragraphs: *How to be coherent*

- **Repetition**
 - Repetition of the same word shows lack of imagination
 - Use “elegant variation”: the same idea that is reworded
 - Civil War: war between States, prolonged conflict, hard-fought war
- **Transitional words and phrases** (See handout)



Paragraph Length

- Paragraph length varies greatly
- Ultimately, the deciding question isn't how long the paragraph is, but how compelling it is
 - If it feels skimpy and not persuasive, it needs more info



How to Integrate Quotes

Direct Quotes

- Jones states, “ _____ ” ().
- Jones writes, “ _____ ” ().
- The prominent philosopher Joe Jones claims, “ _____ ” ().
- According to Jones, “ _____ ” ().
- In Jones’s view, “ _____ ” ().
- Jones agrees/disagrees when she writes, “ _____ ” ().
- In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare maintains that “ _____ ” ().

Paraphrases

- Jones acknowledges that _____.
- Jones agrees that _____.
- Jones argues that _____.
- Jones denies that _____.
- Jones claims that _____.
- The 2007 film adaptation of *Cyrano de Bergerac* portrays Roxane as _____.
- Jones concedes that _____.
- Jones demonstrates that _____.
- Jones emphasizes that _____.
- Jones insists that _____.
- Jones observes that _____.
- Jones suggests that _____.

Explaining AFTER you use a quote

- Jones is saying _____.
- Jones is claiming that _____.
- Jones argues _____.
- In other words, Jones believes _____.
- Jones is insisting that _____.
- Jones's point is that _____.
- The essence of Jones's position is that _____.
- _____ is the most significant factor because _____.
- This passage challenges the assumption that _____.
- This passage supports the view that _____.