

Quote Analysis -- The Easy Way!

Just remember: WPAE!!!

1. **W**riting the quote
2. **P**araphrase
3. **A**nalysis
4. **E**valuation

Ways to introduce quotes:

When (event in book) happened, (character) states, "..."

Ex: When Lady Macbeth kills herself, Macbeth states, "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more (V.V.19-20).

(Character) explains: "... (citation).

(Your own words) "direct quotes from book" ...

Ex: Macbeth pines over his miserable fate, calling life a "walking shadow" (citation).

Ways to paraphrase:

Directly look at quote and replace the text with your words. It is vitally important to maintain the same meaning:

Ex: In other words, Macbeth compares his existence to the condition of being a mere ghost. He goes on to compare people to actors who worry about their brief moment in the spotlight only to cease to exist before he realizes his life is over.

Ways to analyze:

Look at the subtle parts of the quote, and explain why the author used them in his writing--Tone, diction, mood, figurative language (metaphors, similes, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification...there are A LOT).

Ex: The metaphors Shakespeare uses, comparing life to a "walking shadow" and man to "a poor player" emphasize the fleeting nature of life. Shadows are gone as soon as they appear, and actors only assume their character: the people they represent have no true meaning.

Ways to evaluate:

Show the importance of the quote with respect to your argument and your thesis. Explain the significance...Tell the reader why they bothered to read your essay. This is where you tie your thoughts together in a nice bow.

Ex: Here, Macbeth realizes that his pitiful existence, from the moment he decided to kill King Duncan to the moment when his beloved wife killed herself, has been consumed by his reckless ambition. This directly shows the damaging power of ambition. If Macbeth had been content with his previous title, which was prestigious enough, a host of tragedy would have been avoided.

Full text:

When Lady Macbeth kills herself, Macbeth states, "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more" (V.V.19-28). In other words, Macbeth compares his existence to the condition of being a mere ghost. He goes on to compare people to actors who worry about their brief moment in the spotlight only to cease to exist before they realize it is over. The metaphors Shakespeare uses, comparing life to a "walking shadow" and man to "a poor player" emphasize the fleeting nature of life. Shadows are gone as soon as they appear, and actors only assume their character: the people they represent have no true meaning. Here, Macbeth realizes that his pitiful existence, from the moment he decided to kill King Duncan to the moment when his beloved wife killed herself, has been destroyed by his reckless ambition. This directly shows the damaging power of ambition, a major theme of the play. If Macbeth had been content with his previous title, which was prestigious enough, a wealth of tragedy would have been avoided.

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