**I. CLARIFY THE CONTEXT OF QUOTATIONS**

 In quoting from a primary source, be sure the author, work, and context of the passage are clear. Briefly clarifying the context makes your quotation meaningful to the reader and often reduces the length of the quotation.

WEAK:  The clan doesn't always approve of Okonkwo's actions: "The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan" (22).

BETTER: The clan doesn't always approve of Okonkwo's actions. When Okonkwo breaks the peace during the Week of Peace, Ezeani, the priest of the earth  goddess, admonishes him, saying, "The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan" (22).

 In quoting from a secondary source, use the critic's name.  You will thus allow your readers to distinguish easily between the various critics and authors whose ideas you are introducing:

 D. S. Izevbaye, speaking of Gerald Moore, writes, "The gradual shift from literary to essentially social values can be seen, for example, in the criterion which he employs for evaluating the merits of Soyinka's poem, 'Malediction'" (15).

 Use the appropriate punctuation to introduce your quotations. The comma used in the previous example is appropriate because the introductory words do not form a grammatically complete idea. Rather, the quotation serves to complete the idea introduced in the opening words of the sentence. However, you would use a colon to separate a grammatically complete statement from the quotation it introduces:

An old Umuofian describes Okonkwo perfectly: "Looking at a king's mouth, ... one would think he had never sucked at his mother's breast" (19).

**II. INTEGRATE YOUR QUOTATIONS SMOOTHLY INTO YOUR TEXT**

 Choice words and phrases of the work(s) under study can be integrated into your sentences as long as the transplanted words don't destroy the grammatical integrity of your text:

The awakening consciousness of Teacher, Maanan, and Kofi Billy occurs by the sea under the  influence  of "wee" (69) (marijuana).  Significantly, against this same sea, society has built a "breakwater that [keeps] the sea from destroying the road" (49) -  the road leading to that false conception of the world represented in the novel by "the gleam" (10).  To the feeling body and spirit, however, the sea tastes of "strong things" (73).  In its "slow movements stretching back into ages so very long ago," (72) it carries "traces of living things from their beginnings to their endings" (40).

To use this method successfully, be sure you do the following:

1. Keep the same tense by changing the tense in the quotation to correspond to your tense.  You indicate your alterations to the quotation by placing the affected word(s) in square brackets.

2. Write only complete sentences.

3. Clarify pronouns that have no clear antecedents once the quotation has been lifted from the text:

WEAK: "It was in fact one of them who in his zeal brought the church into serious conflict with the clan a year later by killing the sacred python" (Achebe 112).

BETTER: "It was in fact one of [the osu] who in his zeal brought the church into serious conflict with the clan a year later by killing the sacred python" (112)

BETTER: One of the osu "in his zeal brought the church into serious conflict with the clan a year later by killing the sacred python" (112)

4. Make subjects and verbs of the quoted material agree with your subjects and verbs.

**III. ALTER QUOTATIONS LEGITIMATELY**

 As indicated above, use brackets when substituting a word in the quotation to maintain grammatical integrity or to replace an unclear pronoun reference.  Use an ellipsis (three spaced periods) enclosed in square brackets to indicate material omitted from a quotation:

"Those who were able picked up the pieces of shattered worlds [...] and came with us along the wharves to search for some humiliating work" (Armah 65).

**IV. INDENT LONG QUOTATIONS**

 If your prose quotation is four or more lines long or your poetry quotation three or more, you will indent it.  Introduce the quotation using a complete sentence, followed by a colon. Double space the quotation (just as you have been double spacing the rest of the essay) and indent it ten spaces from the left margin.  Do *not* use quotation marks. Here is an example.   
 

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| In "The Baker's Story" by V. S Naipaul, the narrator describes how various  occupations in Trinidad have come to be monopolized by different ethnic groups:  If you want to buy a snowball, who you buying it from? You  wouldn't buy it  from a Indian or a Chineeor a Potogee. You  would buy it from a black man. And I  myself, when I was  getting my place in Arouca fix up, I didn't employ Indian  carpenters or masons. If a Indian in Trinidad decide to go  into the carpentering  business, the man would starve. Who  ever see a Indian carpenter? I suppose the  only place in the  world where they  have Indian carpenters and Indian masons is  India. Is a damn funny thing. (121) |