

RTW Plus: Different Ways of Using Quotes in CERs

When being trained to use the RTW method to form a paragraph, you were encouraged to use a direct quote for the “evidence” aspect of the CER. Provided that the quote is relevant, isn’t too long, and doesn’t disrupt the flow of the paragraph, quotes generally function great in this capacity. What we would like to do here is examine three different ways to utilize quotes in your CERs.

The **first** and most intuitive way is to simply introduce a quote by saying that such and such author has said such and such, and then to offer the quote itself. Here is an example from *Velvet Elvis*, one of the assigned books in The Sacramental Life (THEO2040W):

1.) Bell says that, “I don’t follow Jesus because I think Christianity is the best religion. I follow Jesus because he leads me into ultimate reality” (Bell, 83).

This way of introducing a quote works quite well in most cases, though it lacks a certain sense of flow, and moreover, when it’s the only method used it quickly begins to feel repetitive.

A **second** way to use the same idea as “evidence” would be to quote a smaller portion of the text and integrate it into the natural flow of your sentence. For example:

2.) Bell claims to follow Jesus because he believes this leads him to ultimate reality, not because he necessarily regards Christianity as the “best religion” (Bell, 83).

There are a few things to notice here. First, this second way includes the exact same information as the first, but as a whole the sentence flows more smoothly. Second, when you integrate a quote into the flow of a sentence like this you don’t have to set the quote off with a comma.

The **third** way of utilizing the same idea as “evidence” in one’s CER would be to utilize paraphrase. For example:

3.) Bell’s commitment to Jesus isn’t rooted in the belief that Christianity is somehow superior among the world’s religions, but rather in his theological conviction that Jesus himself is the gateway to ultimate reality (Bell, 83).

Notice that when utilizing paraphrase like this a parenthetical reference to the text is still provided. The reason is that you want it to be abundantly clear that the idea stated is someone else’s and not your own.

The main lesson here is that mixing in paraphrase with these two different ways of using quotations will go a long way to giving your paragraphs a sense of variety, thereby helping your essays avoid feeling mechanical and repetitive.



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