PRESENTING QUOTATIONS IN A PAPER

General pattern for quotations in a paragraph

1. Make your point first
2. Present a quotation as evidence for the point you’ve made.
3. Elaborate on the significance of your point to the thesis.

When citing a quotation in from a book that you are doing a paper on, all you need at the end of the quotation is the page number in parentheses: “An’ live of the fatta the land” (14).

1. If the quotation runs three lines or fewer, put quotation marks around the quotation and keep it as a part of the paragraph.

   One of the most important themes in Of Mice and Men is the importance of dreaming and how dreams for a better life can keep people going when things are looking bad. In the opening section of the novel Lennie begs George to tell him the story of the farm they’re going to have once they get enough money. Lennie interrupts George with a line from the story he’s clearly heard over and over, when he says, “An’ live offa the fatta the land” (14). [note: the period comes after the parentheses]

2. If the quotation mark runs for more than three lines, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one-half inch from the left margin and one-half inch from the right margin, and keep it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks.

   In The Catcher in the Rye, dreams are also important to the main character. In Chapter 22, near the end of the novel, Holden tells his sister what it is he wants to become:

   And I’m standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff—I mean if they’re running and they don’t look where they’re going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. (173)

   Here, Holden wants to save children from hurting themselves, to protect them from the dangers of life. [note: in the quotation, the period comes at the end of the sentence, before the parentheses]
Quotations: When to use ‘em & how to choose ‘em

When?

While there are many times when a quotation is appropriate, these are three common situations where a quotation might be important.

- Whenever you are making a point that another (reasonable) reader might disagree with
  - EG: *Holden is in fact extremely sensitive and thoughtful…*

- When the choice of words in the text is significant
  - EG: *In describing the girl’s death as “consummation,” Piercy may be trying to…*

- When there is a connection between language in different parts of the text
  - EG: *For Romeo, night is a time of promise, but when Friar Lawrence says…*

How?

UNACCEPTABLE
Romeo tells Juliet that he loves her. “The exchange of your love’s vows for mine” (2.2.75)

WEAK
Romeo tells Juliet he loves her in no uncertain terms: “The exchange of your love’s vows for mine” (2.2.75)

SUAVE
Romeo tells Juliet he loves her in no uncertain terms when he requests “The exchange of your love’s vows for mine” (2.2.75).

MORE SUAVE
When Romeo requests “The exchange of your love’s vows for mine” (2.2.75), he is expressing his love for Juliet in no uncertain terms.

During the balcony scene, when Romeo requests of Juliet “The exchange of your love’s vows for mine” (2.2.75), he is expressing his love for her in no uncertain terms.

How Much?

As a general rule, be frugal. Use only what you need. If you are not going to discuss the actual words in the quotation, you do not generally need them.

PS: “Quote” is an action. “Quotation” is a noun. You should not write about “a quote.”