

Writing with the Quotation Sandwich

What is it?

A technique to make your persuasive writing better by incorporating evidence with your thoughts.

Why do it?

The Quotation Sandwich method will automatically increase the sophistication of your writing and make your ideas sound more mature because they will be more structured.

Why the food language?

Sometimes goofy metaphors like a sandwich are easier to remember and understand just because they are, well . . . goofy.

Can I use this in other classes?

Absolutely! The beauty of the Quotation Sandwich is that it will make all of your writing clearer, no matter what the class is.

Recipe for the Quotation Sandwich

The Quotation Sandwich is composed of the following three ingredients:

1. The Top Slice: An Argumentative ***Claim***
2. The Filling: A ***Quote*** that supports the claim
3. The Bottom Slice: ***Commentary*** about the quote

Claim. Quote. Comment.

Easy to remember.

The ***claim*** is your opinion on the material, written as a statement of fact. Technically, you are making an interpretive statement, analyzing the poem, story, data chart, etc. The claim presents a smaller portion of the essay's bigger argument.

The ***quote*** provides concrete, textual support for the claim statement. NOTE: This does not mean that the wording you choose has to come from a spoken sentence written between quotation marks in the original text.

The ***commentary*** functions to tie the quote to the claim. You are taking a sentence to explain why your evidence is important to your idea.

The Paragraph as Sandwich

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Sample Quotation Sandwiches

1. From *Romeo and Juliet*

At the start of the play, before she has met and fallen in love with Romeo, Juliet is a dutiful daughter, willing to take direction from her elders. When Lady Capulet asks her if she can like Paris, she responds agreeably,

I'll look to like, if looking liking move.
But no more deep will I endart mine eye
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.
(1.3.103-105)

Juliet's willingness not only to accommodate her mother's request that she meet Paris but also suspend judgment on him until she receives her mother's approval is surely the mark of an obedient daughter.

2. From *Night*

It was hard for Wiesel to trust in God when he saw babies being murdered before his eyes. Unable to believe in both God's mercy and the Nazi's unreasonable hatred, he writes, "Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust" (Wiesel 32). His faith was fading. What he had believed in with all his being before was beginning to seem false.

(Below: Different writer, same page reference, similar idea.)

Wiesel is scarred at his first sight of the annihilation of the Jews. In witnessing the death of his race, Wiesel admits, "Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever" (32). The flames that engulf the flesh of the Jews also engulf Wiesel's trust in God.

THREE CONDIMENTS FOR SERVING UP QUOTATIONS

We like to think that quotations get dry and lonely when snatched from their cozy beds of text. When we use quotations in Quotation Sandwiches, we ease their transitions into new homes with a few condiments to make the quotations comfortable and the writer's argument palatable!

The DAB

The Dab is the simplest form of serving up a quotation. It calls for the smallest number of writer-supplied words. Linking the quote to its claim, a Dab provides just the bare minimum of words to announce the appearance of a quotation from a text. The Dab is useful when the writer has already established the context of the quotation in previous sentences and needs only to supply the exact quotation to make the point of the claim.

Lady Macduff retorts, "He had none./His flight was madness; when our actions do not,/Our fears do make us traitors" (4.2.2-5).

The DOLLOP

The Dollop involves a bit more writing as it links the quote to its claim. Providing significant detail from the story, the Dollop is the appropriate condiment when the reader needs to be reminded of the context of the quotation—the details of the scene in which the quotation occurs.

Not only does she object to the speed with which he left her, but also Lady Macduff sees her husband's weakness, saying "when our actions do not,/Our fears do make us traitors" (4.2.4-5).

LOTS SAUCE requires extensive writing surrounding just a tiny quotation, phrase, or important word from the text. Lotsa Sauce allows the writer both to maintain coherence with the claim and to maintain the writer's own tone while still grounding the development of the argument in the text.

Ross has told her to be patient with her husband, but she sees more fault in Macduff's departure than just that he left her without talking to her; in addition to thinking he was rash for leaving so suddenly, she also sees in her husband a weakness of character, saying that "our fears do make us traitors" (4.2.5).

12-Sentence Paragraph: The Recipe

The 12-Sentence Paragraph goes about the business of examining a single topic in a clear, orderly, no-nonsense way. Here's the recipe.

1. *Topic Sentence (your thesis/biggest overall claim)*
2. *Further explanation, clarification, elaboration on topic*
3. *Claim #1*
4. *Quotation with context proving Claim #1*
5. *Commentary on Claim #1*
6. *Transition and Claim #2*
7. *Quotation with context proving Claim #2*
8. *Commentary on Claim #2*
9. *Transition and Claim #3*
10. *Quotation with context proving Claim #3*
11. *Commentary on Claim #3*
12. *Clincher sentence summarizing and restating thesis (using different language than sentence #1)*

SAMPLE PARAGRAPH—

In Act I, Juliet is compliant around adults but flirtatious and willful behind their backs. She might seem modest initially, but in fact she has a will of her own and a playful spirit besides. In the first scene as she talks with her mother and the nurse, Juliet does little to suggest that she is anything but a very modest, "good" girl. When Lady Capulet asks her if she can like the family-sponsored suitor, Paris, Juliet replies nicely, "I'll look to like, if looking liking move" (1.3.98). No Elizabethan parent could ask more of a young daughter than that she be pure of heart and willing to be led. When she meets Romeo, though, Juliet flirts with him with a wholeheartedness that belies her seemingly compliant nature. All he has to do is suggest that he would like to kiss her (holily, of course, like a pilgrim before a shrine), and she flirts right back with him, playing coy and suggesting that "palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss" (1.5.98). Between Romeo's first line to Juliet and their first kiss is a mere 15 lines, showing unequivocally that when she's with a boy her own age, she is spirited and playful. Furthermore, afterwards, alone with her Nurse, Juliet is devious. She tricks the Nurse into revealing that "His name is Romeo" (1.5.156), and she lies directly to the Nurse when she is caught bemoaning her fate, saying that she learned a little rhyme from a dancing partner. In deceiving her beloved Nurse, Juliet shows how determined and willful she can be. Out of earshot of the adults, Juliet is a bolder, more self-confident, more independent girl than her first scene with her mother reveals.