

How to Avoid a “Quote Bomb”

A quotation that is all by itself as a complete sentence is called a “quote bomb” because it is disconnected from your analysis and disrupts your writing. Here are some options and examples for skillfully integrating quotations into your writing:

1. Use an introductory or explanatory phrase with a comma

Example: The camel driver advises Santiago, “If you can concentrate only on the present, you’ll be a happy man” (85).

Example: According to the camel driver, “If you can concentrate only on the present, you’ll be a happy man” (85).

2. Make the quotation a part of your own sentence without any punctuation

Example: The camel driver claims that “If you can concentrate only on the present, you’ll be a happy man” (85).

Example: The camel driver does not worry about the past or future because he believes that “life is the moment we’re living right now” (85).

3. Use a complete sentence and a colon

Example: The camel driver gives Santiago advice: “If you can concentrate only on the present, you’ll be a happy man...Life will be a party for you, a grand festival, because life is the moment we’re living right now” (85).

4. Use short quotations as part of your own sentence

Example: The camel driver urges Santiago to “concentrate only on the present” because “life is the moment we’re living right now” (85).

Example: The camel driver claims he “is only interested in the present” because “life is the moment we’re living right now” (85).