

Sports Journalism Skill Module

Quotes

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Understand the need for quotations, and the right way to quote
- Use quotes to bring your stories to life, and to let your interview subjects speak for themselves

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- *You Try It!* Student Worksheet – Quotes: The Pulse of the Story

Additional Online Support:

- www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com
- www.BlueNoseEd.com

Teach the Skill

1. Introduce Quotes: A story without quotations is a basketball game with no slam-dunks. It’s a tennis match with no aces. Tell the students that it is entirely possible to write a sports story without including any quotations, but doing so would be like owning a gold mine and refusing to use a shovel. People who play sports, and people who watch sports, are usually more than ready to talk—at length—about the games they love. Integrating their often colorful speech into a sports story is a quick way for the students to make their writing as exciting as the sports that they are covering.

2. Teach Quotes:

- Tell the students that there are four main ways to use quotations from sources. Go over the following chart, then have them create their own examples in the right-hand column.

Type of Quotation	Example	YOUR Example
<i>Direct Quote.</i> This is a word-for-word use of a person’s words.	“We came out flat,” said Coach Crawford. “Our shots weren’t falling, we weren’t crashing the boards, and we were lazy on D. In the second half, though, we woke up and played some pretty decent basketball.”	
<i>Partial Quote.</i> This uses some of the words the source uses, but paraphrases others.	Coach Crawford said his team came out flat. “Our shots weren’t falling, we weren’t crashing the boards, and we were lazy on D,” he said. But he was pleased with his team’s effort in the second half of the game.	
<i>Fragmentary Quote.</i> This drops only a few quoted words into the story.	Coach Crawford said his team came out “flat.” He noted that his players were not making their shots, were not rebounding well, and were “lazy” on defense. But he noted that in the second half, his squad became more energized and played “some pretty good basketball.”	
<i>Paraphrase.</i> This translates everything the subject says into the writer’s own words.	Coach Crawford said that, in the first half, his team played without much energy. Their shooting was off, they weren’t fighting for rebounds, and their defense was spotty. He did go on to say,	

	however, that in the second half, he was pleased with how his team played.	
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- Ask the students which of the four examples above is more energetic and fun to read. Most will say the first example. This illustrates a general point. If a direct quotation is interesting, it should be used. If the quotation only supplies information, without adding any personal flavor, it is better to use one of the other modes of quotation, or even to paraphrase it. To help the students grapple with this issue, walk them through the following table. At the end, look at the quotations provided and vote to see if they make the cut.

EXAMPLE

When Should You Quote? Ask Yourself These Questions!		
<p>DO Quote If:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quote is interesting or funny, and it sounds like a real person talking. 2. The quote expresses a strong reaction, or a well-reasoned, insightful opinion. 3. The quote dramatically backs up the main point in the story's lead. 	<p>Do NOT Quote If:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You are just trying to prove that you talked to someone. 2. If the source is dull, or if what they are saying is common knowledge. 3. If the quotation doesn't really pertain to the point of the story. 	<p>For Borderline Cases, Ask Yourself these Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the quote memorable? Can you recall it off the top of your head? 2. Does the quote express a strong emotion, or a deep thought that will add to the interest of your story? 3. Which would be clearer, and better for the story—the quotation, or your paraphrase of the quotation?
<p>Do These Quotations Make the Cut? Vote Yes or No!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Yeah, we played pretty good, I guess," said Quarterback Ryan Michaels. "Football is a kind of cool game, sometimes." 2. Senior tennis player Mike Sundstrom said of his opponent, "That guy's serve is like a laser. It comes at you out of nowhere. It's a cotton-picking bazooka. I had no chance. Actually, feel kind of lucky even to be getting out of here alive." 3. "Basketball is played with a round, leather-covered ball, I've been told," noted Coach Blue. "The object of the game, as I understand it, is to put the ball through some sort of 'hoop,' and to do it more times than your opponent does." 		

3. Apply the Skill: Hand out copies of the You Try It! Worksheet, "Quotes: The Pulse of the Story." After reading the directions, have the students get in small groups to work through the exercise. When they are done, ask volunteers from each group to share their work.

QUICK SKILLS CHECK Ask students to tell you the four main ways to use quotations. Also ask them to describe when to use a direct quotation, and when to stick to a paraphrase.

YOU TRY IT!

Quotes: The Pulse of the Story

GOAL

Quotes make a story—especially a sports story—come alive. As you compete in the Blue Nose Sportswriting Contest, pepper your writing with well-chosen quotations, and your chances for success will improve overnight.

DIRECTIONS

Get into pairs and interview each other for five minutes each about a sports-related topic. At the end of the five minutes, write a paragraph reporting your interview. In your paragraph, be sure to use 1) direct quotations, 2) partial quotations, 3) fragmented quotations, and 4) paraphrases.

Interview Subject: _____.

Time and Place: _____.

Sports-Related Topic: _____.

Use this space to take notes on your interview:

Use this space to write the paragraph, complete with quotations, that reports your interview:

Self-Check

Look back at the three-phased process of gathering information for a post-game story. Keep this process in mind as you write other post-game stories. Based upon the work you have put into this chart, do you have a good start and a good plan in mind for your post-game story?