

A. What should be included in the paper

Read two books or one Collected or Selected Poems by a poet. See handout (reverse) for quoting conventions.

I. find out what you can about you can about them (watch tapes available in library, search for interviews; you can even interview them yourself). This section should be about 1-2 pages. Consider these issues:

- What they have written
- what they have won
- where they were born and where they live
- what gender/ ethnic/ religious
- political issues inform their work
- What reviewers say

II. Talk about the following issues:

- What they write about (you can organize by theme, selecting one or two poems as an example for each theme and quoting passages). What about their subject matter seems surprising or interesting?
- "Genre" of poems--narrative (tells a story), dramatic (uses speakers), or lyric (expression that doesn't necessarily tell a clear story)
- Style of poems (formal or not, style of language, style of line, or any other distinctive pattern)
- Who has influenced them, and who have they influenced
- What you like most and least

III. Talk about the organization and argument of the book(s).

- Does the book have an over-riding theme, or are there several unrelated ones?
- What poems begin and end sections; what poems begin and end the book? Why, do you think?
- How many poems are there?

Sections 2 and 3 should be about 5-6 pages.

Your paper should be specific. You should quote from the poetry throughout the book to illustrate your points, but you don't have to quote from every poem.

A Quotation of Up to Three Lines of Poetry

Quotations of up to three lines of poetry should be integrated into your sentence. For example: In Julius Caesar, Antony begins his famous speech with "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears; / I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him" (3.2.75-76). Notice that a slash (/) with a space on either side is used to separate lines.

A Quotation of More than Three Lines of Poetry

More than three lines of poetry should be indented 10 spaces on the left. The line breaks should appear just as they do on the page, but you should not include a slash. As with any extended (indented) quotation, do not use quotation marks unless you need to indicate a quotation within your quotation.

Example:

Stevens's "The Snow Man," too, uses the Melville's imagery of whiteness to talk about the sublime experience.

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;
And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter . . . (1-6).

General Punctuation of Quotations

Place commas and period inside the closing quotation marks, but all other punctuation marks--such as semicolons, colons, exclamation points and question marks--go outside the closing quotation marks except when they are part of the quoted material. Cite line numbers(1-6), or section numbers and line numbers(3.1-6), or act, scene, and line numbers(2.1.1-6), but not page numbers).

Use a 3-dot ellipse to show something left out. Use a 4-dot ellipse to show something left out that includes the end of a sentence. Do not use an ellipse if the part "left out" contains a paragraph break or is longer than the passage you are quoting. Instead, use two different quotes.

Use bracket [] to show material that you changed so that it would make sense in your context (for example, Stevens argues that true poets must have "mind[s] of winter."

Note about Quotations:

Quotations are used to illustrate a specific point (*Stevens uses a long, radically enjambed single sentence to show the difficulty of achieving a "mind of winter"*) or to let the reader preview a short passage that you then analyze (*In this passage Stevens uses winter imagery such as "frost," "crusted with snow," "shagged with ice" and "distant glitter" to evoke the inhuman chill of a world unaltered by human projections*). You should not include lengthy quotes in the paper to make it longer. Don't use any quotes that don't illustrate a point; likewise, you should illustrate most points with quotes.