# UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

## CONNECTICUT

Center for Academic Excellence

# Using Quotations to Support Your Argument

After you have chosen a thesis and outlined your argument, you will want to find evidence, often in the form of quotations, which will help to illustrate your points. Using this evidence effectively will strengthen your arguments and will help the flow of your paper.

Effective use of evidence requires that you include the following:

### Thesis                    Evidence                Analysis

This means that each time you have evidence you wish to use, you should begin with a statement of your **thesis** (the topic sentence), then introduce the **evidence** you are using to support it, and lastly **analyze** that evidence to show how it supports your thesis.

For example, using the MLA documentation style, suppose you are writing a paper about the narrator's feeling of powerlessness in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper." You wish to argue that a power struggle between the narrator and her husband occurs over the issue of the narrator's writing. You've chosen the quotation, "he hates to have me write a word" from page two of the story as evidence for your argument.

**THESIS**
You must first introduce your argument in a topic sentence. Explain how it relates to your central thesis and make a point that will be backed up by your quotation. For example:

> *The narrator utilizes her writing as a vital form of self-expression, which her husband attempts to suppress, as he does all her assertions of will.*

**EVIDENCE**
Next, weave your quotation into a sentence that you begin with your own words. You should generally avoid beginning a sentence with your quotation, or allowing the quotation to stand alone. Here is one way of introducing the quotation from the Gilman story:

> *She tells her reader that "he hates to have me write a word," (2) for he claims to believe that writing endangers her health.*

**ANALYSIS**
Lastly, analyze the quotation. Show the reader how the quotation supports your point. In this case, the quotation supports the idea of a struggle for power over the narrator's writing.

*Her husband belies his fear of her intellect in his need to control not only her physical movements, but the exercise of her mind as well.*

**THESIS – EVIDENCE - ANALYSIS**
Put it all together. When all these pieces are in place, it will be clear to your reader how your evidence supports your argument:

*The narrator utilizes her writing as a vital form of self-expression, which her husband attempts to suppress, as he does all her assertions of will. She tells her reader that "he hates to have me write a word," (2) for he claims to believe that writing endangers her health. Her husband belies his fear of her intellect in his need to control not only her physical movements, but the exercise of her mind as well.*

Using the **thesis**, **evidence**, **analysis** model will help you use evidence effectively, ensuring that each piece of evidence is introduced and analyzed for your reader. For tips on integrating your quotations into sentences, see the handout "Integrating Quotations."