

How to format your paper:

Typed/printed, double-spaced, 1" margins (note: Microsoft Word automatically sets margins to 1.25". Change them in "Page Setup" on the "File" menu). Paragraphs indented 5 spaces at left; do not separate paragraphs by extra blank lines. Quotations of 10 words or less should be integrated into the text; longer quotations should be indented 5 spaces at left and right margins, single spaced, and set off from the text of the essay by a blank line before and after the quotation. (Please see examples below).

How to title your paper:

Your essay should have a fairly specific title – one which will suggest what is most interesting or important about what you have to say. It's worth taking a little thought over the title, not only because it creates the first impression of your essay (that, too); coming up with a phrase which encapsulates your argument can help in focusing that argument. One popular strategy, and not a bad one, is to use a key phrase from the text followed by another phrase of clarification. (For one example, see the article by Kerrigan). The title is not massively important for your first paper, but will matter more for the longer second paper.

How to quote:

Quotation is important in essays on literature, not only to provide evidence for what you're arguing, but also to provide the reader with enough detail to follow along. Think about how different it would be if, in example 1 below, I wrote: "When reading lines 860-61 in Book V, we may respond to the force of the rhetoric while reserving the right to doubt the truth of what is said." Judicious use of quotation clues the reader in, and produces prose that is more interesting to read than a sentence like the previous one.

Short Quotation (2 kinds)

1/ When Satan claims that the rebels "know none before us, self-begot, self-raised by our own quickening power" (V 860-61), we may respond to the force of his rhetoric while reserving the right to doubt the truth of what he says.

NOTE 1: when the quotation is integrated into your own sentence, as here -- your words "the rebels" are the subject of Milton's verb "know" -- make sure the grammar works. To check whether it does, remove the quotation marks and see if the sentence looks right.

NOTE 2: please cite *Paradise Lost* by **book number and line number** (which are the same in all editions), not by page number (which differs between editions). The format used in example 1 above is perfectly adequate for current purposes, but more formally the first reference to the text should be footnoted so that you can provide information on the edition used. I tell you this for your information, since I don't need to know the edition; you can do it or not.

2/ Satan, unlike Adam and Eve, claims not to recall the moment of his creation: “we know no time when we were not as now” (*Paradise Lost* V, 859).

Long Quotation

Here I am, writing along in my essay, along and along and along. Here comes a long quotation from Mary Nyquist’s article on Milton and the interpretation of *Genesis*, beginning now. (Please notice also the brief citation format; see above for a parenthetical citation of *Paradise Lost* by book number and line numbers. I’ll give further information as we go on how to footnote secondary sources when they are first cited).

Just as, in the divorce tracts, Milton joins Adam's words to those of the paternal maker... [imagine more quotation here] Not only the placement of Adam's narrative after Raphael's but also its most salient formal features can thus be seen to be motivated ideologically, and illustrate the causes joining the divorce tracts and *Paradise Lost* (Nyquist, “Gynesis”, 191).

Okay, quotation’s over. Back to the essay now, with double-spacing and regular margins again.

One other thing: anytime you include a long chunk of text, be sure to talk about its details and what, specifically, we should understand from reading it. If there is not enough to say, the quotation should probably be shorter.