

MLA GUIDELINES

Review the following rules for and examples of MLA quotes.

***Remember to use literary present tense.**

Chretien de Troyes wrote five romances. His third, “Lancelot,” introduces the illicit affair between Queen Guenivere and Arthur’s best knight.

***Avoid excessive plot summary of the story.**

***Aim to weave quotes into your own sentences:**

While traveling with Niviane, Merlin has a vision that, at Arthur’s court, Morgan has stolen Exalibur and its scabbard, replacing it “with one that looks identical but is worthless” (Robert de Boron 343).

-Note that you do not need ‘p.’ for page numbers.

-Note that many medieval authors do not have last names. For those who do not, mention their whole name early in your writing, and then you can refer to them by first name.

***Use block form for quotes four lines or longer. Note also my use of ellipses and the punctuation of this quote:**

In Geoffrey of Monmouth’s “History of the Kings of Britain,” the young Arthur is presented as an astute politician:

After receiving the royal insignia, he observed the custom of generously bestowing gifts to all. So many soldiers thronged to him that he ran out of resources for giving. But while a naturally generous and spirited man may thus temporarily lack means, he will not remain poor. Arthur, accordingly, in whom courage was combined with generosity, decided to harry the Saxons.... (67)

***Use single quotes for dialogue within a larger quote:**

In Malory’s version of “The Knight of the Cart,” Guenivere explicitly instructs a young squire to seek Lancelot: “‘Now go,’ said she, ‘when thou seest thy time, and bear this ring into Sir Lancelot du Lake, and pray him as he loveth me that he will see me and rescue me’” (55). On the other hand, in Chretien’s version, Guenivere is overheard as shew quietly mutters, “Ah, my friend, if you knew, I don’t believe you’d ever let Kay lead me a single step away” (126).

***Use three ellipses for omitting words or phrases within a single sentence. Use four ellipses for omitting entire sentences. Be sure not to wrench from context the author's meaning if you choose to use ellipsis. For clarity and to make quotes more smoothly integrated into your own writing, use square brackets to change minor aspects such as tense and pronouns:**

Merlin gives Uther and Pendragon advice about fighting the Saxons, advising them to “summon all of [their] men ... and give them the warmest welcome you can” (Robert de Boron 323).

***When quoting two or three lines of poetry, put slash marks after each line. Although is acceptable to provide line number rather than page number, I recommend page numbers for the particular works we have read:**

The bob and wheel that conclude the first fit provide a warning for Gawain: “Now be very mindful, Sir Gawain,/ That, if in danger you stand,/ You see to the very end/ any enterprise at hand” (“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight” 414).

***DO NOT use a complete quote as the subject of your sentence:**

“He stuck his spears into his steed” shows how the Green Knight tries to intimidate Arthur’s court (“SGGK” 418).

BETTER:

The Green Knight tries to intimidate Arthur’s men by rushing into the court: “He stuck his spears into his steed” (“SGGK” 418).

Works Cited

Capellanus, Andreas. *The Art of Courtly Love*, translated by John J. Perry, Norton, 1969.

Chrétien de Troyes. "Lancelot." *The Romance of Arthur*, edited by Norris J. Lacy and James J. Wilhelm, translated by William W. Kibler, Routledge, 2013, pp. 112-180.

Chrétien de Troyes. "Parcival." *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances*, translated by William W. Kibler, Penguin, 1991, pp. 381-494.