Paragraph with Sources on Hemingway’s “Cat in the Rain”

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Please read this page carefully: it brings together a lot of important information concerning the use, citation, and documentation of sources in an essay.

Sample Paragraph

Below is a paragraph on Ernest Hemingway’s “Cat in the Rain” that uses two secondary sources and that cites and documents material from both the story and from the secondary sources according to MLA standards.

Many details in Ernest Hemingway’s “Cat in the Rain” suggest the isolation and oppression that George’s wife experiences as she remains confined at the hotel. George and his wife are the “only two Americans stopping at the hotel,” and they do “not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room,” suggesting the characters’ alienation because of their lack of contact with others (Hemingway 408). The heavy rain seems to restrict the couple to the hotel room, adding to the sense of isolation and confinement. While George silently reads, his wife “stood at the widow looking out,” perhaps longing for some type of escape (Hemingway 408). The view from the window adds to her sense of isolation. “In the good weather there was always an artist with his easel,” the narrator says, but because of the rain, the artist is absent, and “the motor cars were gone from the square” (Hemingway 408). A single waiter “looking out at the empty square” suggests the emptiness that the woman feels, while the oppressive rain “dripped from the palm trees” (Hemingway 408). “It was raining harder” as the woman leaves the hotel (Hemingway 408), with “the rain outside and the plight of the huddled cat [becoming] her objective correlatives for the low estate
of her spirit” (Monteiro). She considers walking “under the eaves” and then finds her way to a spot “under their window,” with “the maid holding the umbrella over her” (Hemingway 408). The rainy weather and the repeated references to what exists over the woman symbolize the confinement and oppression under which she is living. “The umbrella,” Darren Felty notes, “prevents her full contact with the natural world and the freedom it implies.” After unsuccessfully searching for the cat, she experiences an even greater sense of isolation as she returns to the hotel room alone. The woman expresses her dissatisfaction with her life to her husband, but now George “was not listening” (Hemingway 409). Twice, the narrator describes the woman looking out of the window after she returns to the room. The narrator says that “it was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees,” suggesting that the woman’s unsuccessful search for the cat leaves her feeling even more isolated and confined (Hemingway 409).

Works Cited


The Use of Sources

1. Note that you should use insightful comments from secondary sources that help you develop your interpretation. Do not use material from a secondary if it only summarizes something that happens or is said in the story or something that is obvious from the story itself.
2. Make sure that you understanding completely the meaning of the information that you use from a source and that the meaning will be clear to readers.
3. Never take material from a source out of context. Material from a source in your essay must accurately reflect the meaning of the material as it is presented in the source.
4. Note the balance of supporting material from the primary sources (the story itself) and from the secondary sources. In general, there should be at least two or three quotations from the primary source (the story) for every quotation from a secondary source. The main source of supporting evidence should be the primary source. In general, no more than 20% of an essay should be comprised of material from secondary sources.
5. If you copy more than just a few words in a row from a source, those words must go in quotation marks and the source must be cited. Otherwise, plagiarism might occur.
6. If you paraphrase or summarize material from a source, that material must truly be in your own words. Never copy a sentence from a source, change a few words, and then present the information as if it is in your own words.
7. Quoted words must appear in an essay exactly as they appear in the original source, but material can be deleted from or changed in a quotation if the deletions are indicated with an ellipsis (…) and if material added or changed is indicated with [brackets].
8. Be extra careful to avoid plagiarism. There must be a clear distinction between your words and ideas and the words and ideas from sources. For more information, see “Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism.”
9. Always integrate quotations into your own sentences: no quotation should stand alone in an essay.

The Citation of Sources

1. Note that no page number is given for an online source unless the page numbers (or paragraph numbers) actually appear on the screen. Never cite the page numbers that appear only on printed copies of a source.
2. Note how the source is cited if you have an author and a page number, “like this” (Hemingway 408).
   - Never put punctuation between the author’s last name and the page number.
   - Give only the author’s last name in parentheses, never the author’s full name.
   - Do not repeat the author’s name in parentheses if the name appears in your sentence.
 Give only the page number where the information you are using appears.

3. Note the placement of punctuation and the spacing, “like this” (Monteiro).  
   - Always put the period or the comma after the citation, never in front of it. 
   - Always include a space between the last quotation mark and the first parenthesis.

4. The citation of a source is the same if you quote, paraphrase, or summarize material from the source.

**The Documentation of Sources on the Works Cited Page**

1. The Works Cited page always begins at the top of a new page.
2. The works on the Works Cited page always are listed in alphabetical order.
3. The Works Cited page always is double spaced, with no extra spacing between entries.
4. Titles of short works (essays, articles, short stories) go in quotation marks; the titles of long works (magazines, journals, books) are underlined or italicized.
5. The URLs for online sources should not appear as links and should not be in blue fonts.
6. Split URLs in two if necessary for even right margins.
7. Follow the correct format for sources on the Works Cited page:
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   - See “Documenting Sources from Online Subscription Databases” for the correct format for sources from ProQuest and FirstSearch.

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