Quote with Care

Edit quotations without changing a speaker's meaning

12.5.W.8 "Students will use an ellipsis to indicate omission from quoted material and brackets to indicate an addition or clarification to quoted material."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the ellipsis in Mira's shortened quotation and circle the bracketed words in Jules's quotation. Draw an arrow from each edited quotation to the full statement it came from.

What the Repair Night Report Said

1. At a neighborhood repair night, volunteers recorded what visitors said about fixing old lamps. One visitor, Mira, said, "My lamp flickered at first, but the light stayed on after a volunteer replaced its frayed cord, and I carried it home instead of buying another one." A report focused on what happened to the lamp and what Mira did next. It shortened her words to: "the light stayed on ... and I carried it home instead of buying another one." The ellipsis signals that the report has omitted words from Mira's sentence; it does not suggest that she hesitated.

2. Another visitor, Jules, said, "The repair table helped me see why the switch failed. It also gave me the confidence to try fixes at home." In an article about the event, "It [the repair table] also gave me the confidence to try fixes at home" makes the pronoun clear without pretending Jules spoke the added words. Brackets mark the writer's clarification, not part of Jules's original statement. A third visitor, Nia, offered this account: "I brought a desk fan to the event. A volunteer showed me how to clean its dusty switch. It finally started running again, so I tested it safely before I took it home."

3. Careful editing matters because a shorter quotation can distort a speaker's point. Omar said, "We did not fix every appliance that night, but we explained each repair step, and we told visitors what they could try next." A missing qualifier could turn a cautious claim into a boast. A volunteer, Sal, offered a different detail: "They opened the hall early so we could set up our tools before the visitors arrived." Here, "They" refers to the center staff, according to the event notes. When a writer quotes either speaker, omitted words must be visible, and added explanations must stay separate from the speaker's own words.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Quote Nia's first and last sentences, using an ellipsis to show that you omitted her middle sentence.

2. Quote Nia's last sentence. Add a bracketed clarification immediately after "It" to identify what started running.

3. Quote Omar's full statement, but omit "we explained each repair step, and" with an ellipsis. Keep "not" in the quotation.

4. Quote Sal's entire statement. Add a bracketed clarification immediately after "They" to identify the group.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a two-sentence statement from a visitor at a community event on a topic other than repairs. Write the original statement, then write a shorter quotation that omits words with an ellipsis and clarifies a pronoun with brackets; keep the speaker's meaning.

ANSWER KEY

Quote with Care

GRADE 12 · 12.5.W.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the ellipsis in Mira's shortened quotation and circle the bracketed words in Jules's quotation. Draw an arrow from each edited quotation to the full statement it came from. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Quote Nia's first and last sentences, using an ellipsis to show that you omitted her middle sentence.	**"I brought a desk fan to the event. … It finally started running again, so I tested it safely before I took it home."**
2	Quote Nia's last sentence. Add a bracketed clarification immediately after "It" to identify what started running.	**"It [the desk fan] finally started running again, so I tested it safely before I took it home."**
3	Quote Omar's full statement, but omit "we explained each repair step, and" with an ellipsis. Keep "not" in the quotation.	**"We did not fix every appliance that night, but … we told visitors what they could try next."**
4	Quote Sal's entire statement. Add a bracketed clarification immediately after "They" to identify the group.	**"They [the center staff] opened the hall early so we could set up our tools before the visitors arrived."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Original: "Our neighbors planted seedlings along the sidewalk on Saturday, even though rain delayed the work for an hour. They watered the new trees before the gates closed."
Edited: "Our neighbors planted seedlings … on Saturday, even though rain delayed the work for an hour. They [our neighbors] watered the new trees before the gates closed."

Accept equivalent quotations if ellipses accurately mark omitted words and bracketed clarifications identify the intended referent without changing the speaker's meaning. In Part 3, check that the edited quotation can be traced to the student's original statement.