

The Fun World of Quote Analysis

Say	Mean	Matter
<p>This is a direct reference to the text – either through an exact quote or a paraphrase of the quote. Be sure to include the page number in MLA format.</p>	<p>This is about interpretation! You need to cite the context of the quote first, and then give an idea about what it means second.</p> <p>In order to do this, answer these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO is speaking? • To WHOM? • WHAT does the quote say? (summarize) • WHERE and WHEN was the quote said? • WHY did the character say the quote? <p>Once you’ve established the context, “read between the lines” and try to interpret what you think the author means in this particular quote.</p>	<p>This is about the importance or significance of the quote in relation to the theme of the work.</p> <p>In order to do this, answer these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications? • Why is the quote important to the story as a whole? • What is the significance of the quote? What does it reveal about human condition? • How does this quote relate to the theme and the author’s ultimate purpose? <p>You should also consider these points...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a special look at the use of language – particular words, phrases, the tone of the work, symbolism, and/or metaphors. • Connect this passage with the meanings of other passages.

Allow me to illustrate how this works!

Say	Mean	Matter
<p>“Truth is rarely pure and never When Algy declares this to Jack early Wilde’s commentary concerning the simple. Modern life would be very in Act I, he is seeking clarification nature of truth solidifies his major tedious if it were either and modern about the inscription in Jack’s theme of the play, and ironically literature a complete impossibility” cigarette case. The two are lounging evokes laughter from the very people (8).</p> <p>from Oscar Wilde’s <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i></p>	<p>When Algy declares this to Jack early in Act I, he is seeking clarification about the inscription in Jack’s cigarette case. The two are lounging in Algy’s well-appointed living room, and consequently eating all of the sandwiches prepared for Aunt Augusta’s visit. The audience is given insight into Algy’s character; he appears to be a man who enjoys the convoluted nature of British society, as he is a member of the upper echelon and can clearly afford to spend his days lounging about eating sandwiches and practicing the piano. The biting commentary about when analyzed in light of the title of “modern life . . . [and] literature” hints at both Algy’s disdain for Victorian societal norms and the fiction of the time – and no doubt echoes Wilde’s own opinion about his social and literary contemporaries.</p>	<p>Wilde’s commentary concerning the nature of truth solidifies his major theme of the play, and ironically evokes laughter from the very people he is denigrating. Wilde’s satire is a social critique of what he believed to be an overly stodgy, materialistic, and myopic upper class. In creating two bumbling protagonists, he sheds light on the nature of Victorian society as Algy and Jack are absurd and (at times) despicable figures who mirror both the people and attitude of the time. The significance of Wilde’s statement is multi-faceted; this quote, when analyzed in light of the title of the work, appears as if Wilde is chastising his society for its frustrating lack of honesty and tendency to become overwrought over trivial matters (as exemplified when Jack states that he nearly employed the services of Scotland Yard to retrieve his cigarette case). However, when taken from a different angle, Wilde’s statement can be regarded as a jab at his literary contemporaries, and their works which he feels are, like society, overworked and entirely too untruthful.</p>

Tying it all Together:

Okay, so here’s the secret as to why I have you toil over your *Say-Mean-Matter* chart with every single piece of fiction we tackle ... ready? ☺

This chart could represent one complete persuasive body paragraph. No seriously! Allow me to demonstrate.

1. Turn your “mean” column into a single claim about the work.
2. The “say” column; all you need to do is use TIES to create the perfect evidence statement!
3. You guessed it: the “matter” column is your interpretation!