Using Quotations

Quotations serve to show that you are engaging in a conversation that is already underway.  Quotations help provide credit to your argument; that is, they “lend” authority to the position you are trying to proffer.  You will want to carefully select and pare down quotations so as to have enough “outside” authority, but you by no means want to have your paper steeped in quotations.

Things to keep in mind

-Quotations do not (unfortunately) speak for themselves (you will need to do the talking for them)
-Quotations should be introduced and explained or interpreted
-Try to avoid using the language “This quote proves that” or “This quote shows that” (in fact it is a quotation only because you are using it as such)

Some basic formulae for introducing

X states, “­­\_\_\_\_\_”
According to X, “\_\_\_\_\_”
In her book, ­­\_\_\_\_\_, X maintains that “\_\_\_\_\_”
X agrees when she writes, “\_\_\_\_\_”
X disagrees when he writes, “\_\_\_\_\_”

Some basic formulae for explaining

In other words, X believes \_\_\_\_\_.
X is insisting that\_\_\_\_\_.
X’s point is that\_\_\_\_\_.
In short, \_\_\_\_\_.

From Rebecca Griffin, UMASS Amherst