



THE WRITING CENTER

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Call ahead for an appointment with a student Writing Consultant or a professional Writing Specialist.
Drop-ins also welcome and accommodated whenever possible.

Grammar Tips - Quotation Marks

A. Quotation Marks with Direct and Indirect Quotations

With Prose Quotations

Direct quotations are the exact words said by someone or the exact words you saw in print which you are recopying in your paper. Use a set of quotation marks to enclose direct quotations included in your writing. Use a capital letter with the first word of a direct quotation of a whole sentence. Do not use a capital letter with the first word of a direct quotation of part of a sentence. If the quotation is interrupted and then continues in the same sentence, do not capitalize the second part of the quotation.

Examples:

Mr. and Mrs. Allen, owners of a 300-acre farm, said, "We refuse to use that pesticide because it might pollute the nearby wells."

Mr. and Mrs. Allen stated that they "refuse to use that pesticide" because of possible water pollution.

"He likes to talk about football," she said, "especially when the Super Bowl is coming up."

Indirect quotations are not the exact words, but the rephrasing or summarizing of someone else's words. Do not use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Example: According to their statement to the local papers, the Allens refuse to use pesticide because of potential water pollution.

Quotation within a quotation:

Use single quotation marks for a quotation enclosed inside another quotation.

Example: The agricultural reporter for the newspaper explained, "When I talked to the Allens last week, they said, 'We refuse to use that pesticide.' "

Omitted words in a quotation:

If you leave words out of a quotation, use an ellipsis mark to indicate the omitted words. If you need to insert something within a quotation, use a pair of brackets to enclose the addition.

Full direct quotation:

The welfare agency representative said, "We are unable to help this family whom we would like to help because we don't have the funds to do so."

Omitted material with ellipsis:

The welfare agency representative said, "We are unable to help this family . . . because we don't have the funds to do so."

Added material with brackets:

The welfare agency representative explained that they are "unable to help this family whom [they] would like to help."

Indented long quotations:

For quotations that extend more than four typed or handwritten lines on a page, set the quotation off by indenting ten spaces from the left margin and double-space the quotation. Do not use quotation marks for this indented material.

With Poetry

Short quotations

When you quote a single line of poetry, write it like any other short quotation. Two lines can be run into your text with a slash mark to indicate the end of the first line. Use quotation marks.

Example:

In his poem "Mending Wall," Robert Frost says: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall,/That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it."

Long quotations

If the quotation is three lines or longer, set it off like a longer quotation. (Some people prefer to set off two-line quotations also, for emphasis.) Quote the poem line by line as it appears on the original page, and do not use quotation marks. Indent ten spaces from the left margin.

Example:

In his poem "Mending Wall," Robert Frost questions the building of barriers and walls: Before I built a wall I'd ask to know What I was walling in or walling out And to whom I was like to give offense.

With Dialogue

Write each person's speech, however short, as separate paragraphs. Use commas to set off "he" or "she said." Closely related bits of narrative can be included in the paragraph. If one person's speech goes on for several paragraphs, use quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph but not at the end of the paragraphs before the last one. To signal the end of the person's speech, use quotation marks at the end of the last paragraph.

B. Quotation Marks for Minor Titles and Parts of Wholes

Use quotation marks for:

- titles of parts of larger works, such as titles of book chapters, magazine articles, and episodes of television and radio series.
- short or minor works such as songs, short stories, essays, short poems, one-act plays, and other short literary works that are less than three-act plays or book length. (Use underlines or italics for larger, complete works.)

Do not use quotation marks for referring to the Bible or legal documents.

C. Quotation Marks for Words

Use quotation marks for:

- words used as words and not for their meaning
- words used in special ways, such as for irony
- technical or unfamiliar terms used for the first time (and defined)

D. Punctuation with Quotation Marks

When you introduce quotations, use the comma to set off less formal expressions such as "he said," "she asked," or "Brady stated." Use the colon to introduce formal quotations and quotations that have two or more sentences.

Examples:

As D. H. Nachas explains, "The gesture of greeting others differs greatly from one culture to another."

D. H. Nachas explains cultural differences in greeting others: "Touching is not a universal sign of greeting. While members of European cultures meet and shake hands as a gesture of greeting, members of Asian cultures bow to indicate respect. "

Put commas and periods before the second quotation mark at the close of the quotation, except when a reference follows the quotation.

Examples:

He said, "I may forget your name, but I never remember a face."

Jenkins stated, " Smith's policy was to do nothing" (27).

Put colons and semicolons after the second quotation mark at the close of the quotation.

Example:

Williams described the experiment as "a definitive step forward"; other scientists disagreed.

Put the dash, question mark, and exclamation point before the second set of quotation marks when the dash, question mark, or exclamation point apply to the quotation and after the second set of quotation marks when one of these punctuation marks applies to the whole sentence.

Examples:

He asked, "Do you need this book?"

Does Dr. Lim always say to her students, "You must work harder"?

E. Unnecessary Quotation Marks

- Do not put quotation marks around the titles of your essays.
- Do not use quotation marks for common nicknames, bits of humor, technical terms that
- readers are likely to know, and trite or well-known expressions.

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