

Quotation Marks

Direct Quotations

Use quotation marks when quoting a source directly.

This morning I said to her, "Take out the garbage."

Use single quotation marks when one quote is enclosed within another.

*In one of his essays, Russell Baker humorously remarks, "I know what 'the price has been adjusted' means in *New Age Babble*. It means the 'price is going up.'"*

Quotation marks are not used with an indirect quotation.

When I saw the professor in the hallway, I told him that I was going to be late.

Quoting Lengthy Passages of Prose and Poetry

For quoted passages of prose that exceed four typed lines, do not use quotation marks. Begin a new line and indent ten spaces from the left margin for each line of the quotation. This format is called block quotation.

When quoting poetry that exceeds three lines, do not use quotation marks. Indent the lines of the poem ten spaces from the left margin of your text. Reproduce the format of the poem as closely as possible.

Quoting Short Sections of Poetry

Quoting poetry is similar to quoting prose; however, the lines of poetry are separated with slashes. Include a space before and after each slash. Always follow the capitalization of your source.

In "Dream Deferred" Hughes asks, "What happens to a dream deferred? / Does it dry up / like a raisin in the sun?"

Quoting Dialogue

When quoting conversations or dialogue, enclose the words of each speaker in double quotation marks. Begin a new paragraph for each new speaker. Capitalize the first word of the quotation.

*"Are you ready to go to the store?" Tracey asked.
Rick answered, "Not yet, maybe in a few minutes."*

If the material quoted from another writer begins in the middle of the sentence, do not capitalize the first word.

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln declared the slaves "forever free."

Words Used in Special Ways

Quote when using words for the purpose of irony.

My dieting father's "little lunch" consisted of two double bacon cheeseburgers, two orders of onion rings, and a huge banana split.

When defining a technical word for the first time, use quotation marks around the word and define it. Do not use quotation marks for the word after it has been defined once.

“Plagiarism” – the undocumented use of another person’s words or ideas – can result in expulsion. Plagiarism is a serious offense.

Words being referred to as words can either be italicized (underlined) or placed within quotation marks. Make sure you are consistent in whichever method you choose.

INCONSISTENT: *Many people confuse “affect” and effect.*

CONSISTENT: *Many people confuse “affect” and “effect.”*

Quotations with Periods and Commas

Periods and commas appear just before closing quotation marks.

“I really enjoyed the cupcakes,” she said. “I cannot wait to sample the pie.”

Quotations with Semicolons and Colons

Semicolons and colons are placed just after closing quotation marks.

Mrs. Chandler claimed, “Many students enjoy participating in cooperative learning projects”; however, the school did not allow her to arrange these projects.

Question Marks, Exclamation Points, and Dashes

If a question mark, exclamation point, or dash is a part of the quotation, place it before the closing quotation marks.

“Did you buy her a birthday present?” he asked.

We screamed, “Go away!”

If a question mark, exclamation point, or dash is not part of the quotation, place it after the closing quotation marks.

Have you ever read the story “The Three Little Pigs”?

I cannot believe you have never seen the Seinfeld episode “The Germaphobe”!

Avoid the Overuse of Quotation Marks

Writers often overuse quotation marks when they use slang or international clichés in academic writing. Instead, eliminate slang and clichés and find words that are appropriate to your audience and purpose.

INCORRECT: *Shelly was so hungry she could “eat a horse.”*

CORRECT: *Shelly was extremely hungry.*

Do not enclose a word in quotation marks simply to emphasize it.

INCORRECT: *“Teamwork” leads to success.*

CORRECT: *Teamwork leads to success.*

Sources:

DiYanni, R. & Hoy, P.C. (2001) *The Scribner Handbook for Writers*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.

Troyka, L.Q. (1999) *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

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