



## Quotation Marks

Brought to you by the Purdue University Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/index.htm>.

For additional information on quoting sources, see the Purdue OWL handout Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_quotprsum.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_quotprsum.html). For practice using quotation marks, try the separate exercise at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g\\_quoteEX1.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_quoteEX1.html) (with Answer Key at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g\\_quoteA1.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_quoteA1.html)). For more information on writing research papers and citing sources, see our extensive research paper workshop at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/index.html>.

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## Quotation Marks with Direct and Indirect Quotations

### Quoting Prose

Direct quotations are another person's exact words--either spoken or in print--incorporated into your own writing.

- Use a set of quotation marks to enclose each direct quotation 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 your sentence, do not capitalize the second part of the quotation.

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 exact words but rather rephrasings or summaries of another person's words. Do not use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

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

Below are some further explanations and examples of how to integrate quoted prose into your own writing.

#### Quotation within a quotation

Use single quotation marks for a quotation enclosed inside another quotation. For 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. For example:

<i>full quotation</i>	The welfare agency representative said, "We are unable to help every family that we'd like to help because we don't have the funds to do so."
<i>omitted material with ellipsis</i>	The welfare agency representative said, "We are unable to help every family . . . because we don't have the funds to do so."
<i>added material with brackets</i>	The welfare agency representative explained that they are "unable to help every family that [they would] like to help."

#### Block quotations

A quotation that extends more than four typed lines on a page should be indented one inch from the left margin (the equivalent of two half-inch paragraph indentations). Maintain double spacing as in the main text, and do not use quotation marks for the block quotation.

## Quoting 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.

In his poem "Mending Wall," Robert Frost writes: "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 block quotation (see above). Some writers prefer to set off two-line verse quotations also, for emphasis. Quote the poem line by line as it appears on the original page, and do not use quotation marks.

Indent one inch from the left margin.

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.

## Writing Dialogue

Write each person's spoken words, however brief, as a separate paragraph. Use commas to set off dialogue tags such as "she said" or "he explained." Closely related narrative prose can be included in a paragraph with dialogue. If one person's speech goes on for more than one paragraph, use quotation marks to open the speech and at the beginning--but not the end--of each new paragraph in the speech. To close the speech, use quotation marks at the end of the final paragraph.

## Quotation Marks for Titles of Minor Works and Parts of Wholes

Use quotation marks for:

- titles of short or minor works, such as songs, short stories, essays, short poems, one-act plays, and other literary works that are shorter than a three-act play or a complete book.
- titles of parts of larger works, such as chapters in books; articles in newspapers, magazines, journals, or other periodical publications; and episodes of television and radio series.

Use underlining or italics for titles of major works or of works that contain smaller segments such as books; plays of three or more acts; newspapers, magazines, journals, or other periodical publications; films; and television and radio series.

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

## Quotation Marks for Words

Use quotation marks to indicate words used ironically, with reservations, or in some unusual way.

The great march of "progress" has left millions impoverished and hungry.

For words used as words themselves or for technical or unfamiliar terms used for the first time (and defined), use italics.

The English word *nuance* comes from a Middle French word meaning "shades of color."

The use of *chiasmus*, or the inversion of syntactic elements in parallel phrases, can create rhetorically powerful expressions.

## Punctuation with Quotation Marks

Use a comma to introduce a quotation after a standard dialogue tag, a brief introductory phrase, or a dependent clause, for example, "He asked," "She stated," "According to Bronson," or "As Shakespeare wrote." Use a colon to introduce a quotation after an independent clause.

As D. H. Nachas explains, "The gestures used for greeting others differ greatly from one culture to another."

D. H. Nachas explains cultural differences in greeting customs: "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 within closing quotation marks, except when a parenthetical reference follows the quotation.

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

History is stained with blood spilled in the name of "civilization."

Mullen, criticizing the apparent inaction, writes, "Donahue's policy was to do nothing" (27).

Put colons and semicolons outside closing quotation marks.

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

Benedetto emphasizes three elements of what she calls her "Olympic journey": family support, personal commitment, and great coaching.

Put a dash, question mark, or exclamation point within closing quotation marks when the punctuation applies to the quotation itself and outside when it applies to the whole sentence.

Philip asked, "Do you need this book?"

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

Sharon shouted enthusiastically, "We won! We won!"

I can't believe you actually like that song, "If You Wanna Be My Lover"!

## 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.

You can practice these rules by doing the accompanying exercise at

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g\\_quoteEX1.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_quoteEX1.html).

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