Proper Use of Quotes and Quotation Marks

Quotation Marks: There are two types of quotation marks: **single** (' ') and **double** (" ").

Single Quotation Marks are used to indicate dialogue within another quotation.

> Example: "The girl answered her mother by saying, 'I don't want to go alone.' She appeared
> to be shivering from the cold" (4).

> *If quoting a source that quotes someone else: Lin found that, "the study was inconclusive, and thus
> did not prove anything" (qtd. In Hernandez 205).

Double Quotation Marks are used to enclose a direct quotation (to indicate when another person's words are being used within your own writing). **Do not** use quotation marks for a large block quotation.

> Example: According to Diana Hacker in *Rules for Writers*, **"grammar checkers can help with
> some, but by no means all, of the sentence-level problems in a typical draft"** (30).

Double Quotation Marks are also used to indicate the title of short works, such as articles, poems, and stories.

> Example: In **"Sonny's Blues,"** the narrator remains unnamed.

Quotation Marks with other Punctuation:

Periods or commas: Place them inside of the quotation marks, unless there is a citation immediately following.

> Example: Unlike Kate Chopin's **"The Story of an Hour,"** her novel *The Awakening* was
> popular in class.
>
> Example: Alexie describes the town's sign as reading, **"Welcome to Wellpinit, Population:
> Variable"** (3).

Colons or semicolons: Place outside the quotation marks.

> Example: The store's sign said **"Open Every Day Until 7 p.m.";** when we arrived at 5 p.m.,
> however, the door was locked.

Question marks and exclamation points: Place inside of the quotation marks if the punctuation pertains only to the quote, but place outside the quotation marks if pertaining to the whole sentence.

> Example: As soon as Emmanuel comes home, he will ask, **"What's for dinner?"**
>
> Example: Have you ever read **"Letter from Birmingham Jail"?**

Punctuation for Introducing Quoted Material:

Formal introduction: Formal introductions (introductions that use full sentences) should use a colon at the end of the independent clause that is introducing the quote.

> Example: Mark Twain's humorous idioms can actually instruct people on how to live a better life**: "Be
> careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint."**

Verbs of attribution: Verbs of attribution are used to show that you are quoting, paraphrasing, or otherwise referencing someone else's words. Use a comma when introducing or following the quote with "he said" or "she argues."

> Example: In his poem "The Road Less Traveled," Robert Frost proclaims**, "I took the one less
> travelled by/ And that has made all the difference."**

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Punctuation for Introducing Quoted Material (cont.):

Quote at the beginning of a sentence: Set the quote off with a comma, unless the quotation is supposed to be a question or exclamation; in that case, use the appropriate mark for the type of phrase.

> Example: **"**Scathingly funny**,"** which is how the *Los Angeles Times* described *Reservation Blues* in a recent review.
> Example: **"**Are you sure we're not lost**?"** he asked**,** concerned about how dark it was getting.

Blended quotation: Blended quotations work quoted material into original material in a grammatically seamless manner. Depending on how the quote is integrated into the sentence, either a comma or no punctuation at all is appropriate. Check other rules for punctuation for more clarification.

How to Use Quoted Material:

Always introduce the quote: Do not use a quote unless you have contextualized the quote in some way. Introduce quotes by providing the author's full name and/or the title of the material from where the quote was taken. Once you have stated the author's full name the first time, you may use their last name for each subsequent reference.

> Example: In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, it is said, "I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel" (Chapter 10). Here, Shelley has made a reference to the biblical story of the fallen angel.

Use only the most essential information: Quotations are most effective when they are used sparingly. You should only use a quote if the information cannot be repeated in any better fashion, or if you are analyzing the author's exact words.

Making changes: Generally, you should quote the material exactly as the author originally wrote it, including punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. If you do change the quote, follow the appropriate guidelines listed below.

> ***Omitting words*** – If you find a long quote and only want to use certain parts, you can omit unnecessary wording by using ellipses (**…**).
>
> > Example: (Original Quote) "'Ah, poor dear, so it is!' said the nurse, picking up the cork of the green bottle, which had fallen out on the pillow, as she stooped to take up the child. 'Poor dear!'" (3).
> >
> > Example: (In the paper) In his novel *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens conveys panic through repetitive language. When Oliver's mother dies, the nurse laments, "Ah, poor dear, so it is**…** Poor dear!" (3).
>
> ***Changing words for clarity*** – If the quote doesn't coincide with your own wording (such as with verb tenses or pronouns), you can clarify changes you make to the original quote by placing your own words in brackets (**[ ]**).
>
> > Example: (Original Quote) "Here he walked even faster than before; nor did he linger until he had again turned into a court" (184).
> >
> > Example: (Changed) "Here **[**the old man**]** walked even faster than before; nor did he linger until he had again turned into a court" (184).

❖ Note: If you find yourself making multiple changes or omissions, you may want to paraphrase the quote instead of using a direct quote.

Source Material Gathered From: "How to use Quotation Marks" & "MLA Formatting Quotations" -Purdue OWL and Columbia College MLA Citation Guide online

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