

## QUOTATION MARKS

1. Quotation marks are used to show direct quotes:

“I’m afraid it might rain before tomorrow,” Jeremy sighed.

“It’s beautiful,” Sandra said, “just like my other one.”

Note: Four or more lines of quotation are indented, not enclosed in quotation marks.

2. Quotation marks indicate dialogue.

“Well, I guess you’re proud of your grades,” I said.

“No, I’m not,” he replied.

Note: If a speaker’s words exceed one paragraph, use quotations at the beginning of each new paragraph, but place the end quote only after the last paragraph.

3. Use quotation marks to set off phrases directly quoted within a sentence:

According to Hypocrites, physicians must remember to “first, do no harm” when treating patients.

4. Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote within a quote:

“She ran down the hall and yelled, ‘Let me through!’ before colliding with Greg,” Melissa told the security guard.

The security guard told police, “When I talked to the suspect, she said, “I didn’t do it.””

6. Use quotation marks to set off the following minor titles:

Short stories

songs

essays

Short poems

television & radio episodes

magazine and journal articles

Note: Italicize or underline titles of books, newspapers, and magazines.

7. Quotation marks are sometimes used to show irony:

His “humor” was cruel.

Note: Do not enclose clichés or slang in quotation marks.

WRONG: Call me “crazy,” but I like that color.

## PUNCTUATING QUOTATION MARKS

1. PERIODS AND COMMAS are always placed inside the quotation marks.

“Yesterday is forgotten,” I said.

Note: MLA style contradicts this rule for parenthetical citations:  
Jones stated, “Yesterday is forgotten” (23).

When using a standard expression to introduce quoted material , use a comma after the expression and before the quotation mark.

John asked, “What time do we eat?”

If the quote is not introduced but written as part of a sentence , punctuate it with or without a comma depending on the sentence structure.

Everyone agreed “to be or not to be” is a great line.

When the rain started, “run for cover!” was everyone’s mantra.

2. COLONS AND SEMICOLONS are always placed outside the quotation marks.

When questioned, one student confided, “I don’t understand the assignment”; the other students didn’t respond.

Use a colon if the quoted material is preceded by an independent clause.

My instructor frequently repeated this astonishment: “Don’t come to class late.”

3. QUESTION MARKS, EXCLAMATION POINTS, AND DASHES go inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted material. They go outside the quotation marks when they apply to the whole sentence.

He asked, “Did you like the movie?”

Didn’t I just say, “That was a good movie”?