Quotation Marks with Direct and Indirect Material

Quoting Prose

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

- Use a set of quotations marks to enclose each direct quotation included in your writing.
  - Mr. and Mrs. Allen said, "We refuse to use that pesticide because it might pollute the nearby wells."
- 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 a portion of a sentence.
  - Mr. and Mrs. Allen stated that they "refuse to use that pesticide" because of possible water pollution.
- If the quotation is interrupted and then continues in your sentence, do not capitalize the second part of the quotation.
  - "He likes to talk about football," she said, "especially when the Super Bowl is coming up."

Indirect quotations are not exact words but rather paraphrasing or summaries of another person’s words. Do not use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

- According to their statement to the local papers, the Aliens refuse to use pesticides because of potential water pollution.

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 Aliens 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.

- Omitted material with ellipsis
  - The welfare agency representative said, "We are unable to help every 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 every family that [they would] like to help."
Block Quotations
A quotation that extends more than four typed lines in MLA or 40 plus words in APA on a page should be indented one inch from the left margin — the equivalent of two half-inch paragraph indentations. Maintain spacing as with the main text, and do not use quotation marks for the block quotation.

Quoting Poetry (MLA style)
Long Quotations
- If the quotation is three lines or longer, set it off with a block quotation. 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.

Short Quotations
- When you quote a single line of poetry, write it like any other short quotation. When quoting two lines of poetry, use a slash mark (/) to indicate the break between lines. Quotation marks will follow the same guidelines within poetry as within prose.
  - In his poem "Mending Wall," Robert Frost writes: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall, / That sends the frozen-groundswell under it.”

Writing Dialogue
- When writing, for example, a conversation between two or more persons, write each person's spoken words, however brief, on the next line as if it were a new 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. For example:

  Mark came into the house and said, “Work was terrible today.”
  Joe, his friend, replied, “Really? Why’s that?”
  “The printer broke, and I was nearly half an hour late to present at a meeting.”
  “Wow. That is terrible.”

- 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.

  Paul began ranting about his day. “I can’t believe...for my first day.
  “And then...until the end of my shift.
  “I still do not understand...it’s outrageous!”
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 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 such as films and television and radio series.

Punctuation with Quotation Marks

- Use a comma to introduce a quotation after a standard dialogue tag, a brief introductory phrase, or a dependent clause. Some examples of this would include: "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 forget 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?"
  - Sharon shouted enthusiastically, "We won! We won!"
  - I can't believe you actually like that song, "If You Wanna Be My Lover!"

The Use of Sic

- Use the word "sic" to indicate the quote you’re incorporating has an error. Sic is a Latin term that means "thus."
  - The reporter stated, “I is (sic) going to cover the story on Ferguson.”