

## 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.'"

### 5. Use quotation marks to set off exact thoughts:

"What am I going to do now?" I wondered.

### 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"?