How to Punctuate
Quotations
..…………………..……. *a practical handout*

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What are quotations?

Quotations or quotes refer to a single word, phrase, or series of sentences that are said or written by someone who is not the original writer or speaker. If quotations and original writing are not separated, plagiarism occurs, which means to claim someone else's work as your own.

In order to prevent plagiarism, quotation marks are used to show where someone else's work begins. Quotation marks, like parentheses, must be at the beginning and end of a word, phrase, or series of sentences.

Example:

At first, Lucy Pevensie was afraid of Aslan. She hid her face in his mane, "But there must have been magic in his mane. She could feel lion-strength going into her."

There are a few different rules that describe how quotations should be punctuated and where quotation marks should go. The following will describe the rules and how to use them in your own writing.

Commas and Periods

Rule #1

Commas are used to introduce and interrupt a quote.

Examples:

Lizzie said, "You could not have made me the offer of your hand in any possible way that would have tempted me to accept it."

In the article, "The Ophelia Syndrome," the author discusses its application to the learning experience in college.

Rule #2

When using dialogue tags (i.e. he said, they shouted, she responded, Larry whispered), a comma comes before or after a quote.

Examples:

"The garden is beautiful," Penelope responded.

"You were the chosen one," he said, "it was said that you were supposed to destroy the Sith, not join them."

Rule #3

Commas and periods at the end of a quote should go inside the quotation marks. This rule applies to both double and single quotation marks.

Examples:
>"Elizabeth Bennet refuses Mr. Darcy for many reasons, but Darcy's most insulting comment referred to her family's 'inferiority.'"

Rule #4

For research papers, it is important to cite where you found your quote at the end of the sentence. This is called an in-text citation. There are different in-text citation formats depending on the type of citation style your professor wants. No matter the citation style, periods should go at the end of the sentence after the in-text citation.

Examples:
>"Apples have the same consistency as potatoes" (Smith 2019).

Exclamation Points/Question Marks

Rule #5

Question marks should go inside of the quotation marks if the quote is a question. If the quote is not a question, but the sentence is, the question mark should be outside the quotation marks.

Examples:
>The caterpillar answered, "Who are you?"

>Why did you say that I was "ugly and annoying"?

Rule #6

If the quoted question ends in the middle of the sentence, the question marks takes the place of a comma.

Example:
>She asked the question, "Why is a raven like a writing desk?" before jumping into the pool.

Rule #7

Similar to a question mark, when a quote has an exclamation mark, the quotation marks should go after the exclamation point. If the sentence does have an exclamation point, but the quote does not, then the exclamation point goes outside of the quotation marks.

Examples:
>"Yes, I will marry you!"

>The police shouted at me, saying "Stop right there"!

Block Quotations

Rule #8

Block quotations are used when a longer quote (refer to the citation style to determine the characteristics for a longer quote) is included in your writing. Block quotations do not use quotation marks to determine the beginning and end of the quote. End the quotation with a period, followed by the in-text citation.

> **Example:**
> Many of Agatha Christie's novels address morality and justice. Her book And Then There Were None follows twelve people and their stay on an island. All twelve people are accused of committing some crime. As the story progresses, people begin to be killed in unusual and staged circumstances. Christie's genius emerges when she reveals that a majority of the crimes were not punishable by the law. (Tavis 2018)

Brackets

Rule #9

Brackets are most often used to add clarifying information to a quotation. This added information can be a change in a verb tense, a noun, or a short phrase.

> **Example:**
> "The shoe snagged on [Pearl's] dress and ripped a hole in the material."

Single Quotation Marks

Rule #10

Single quotation marks are used when there is a quote inside a quote. If the single quotation mark comes at the end of a quotation, add a space between the single and double quotation marks.

> **Examples:**
> "The trial was considered a 'failure' because it did not have the intended result" (Depp 2014).
>
> "Elizabeth Bennet refuses Mr. Darcy for many reasons, but Darcy's most insulting comment referred to her family's 'inferiority.' "

Colons and Semicolons

Rule # 11

Colons and semicolons should go outside the quotation marks when at the end of a quote.

> **Example:**
> Austen did not "agree with Gregerson's viewpoint"; nevertheless, Austen treated Gregerson amiably.

Slash Marks

Rule #12

Slash marks are used to separate one to three lines of poetry. Quotation marks should be at the end and beginning of the poetry lines.

> **Example:**
> In the poem, "Luck," Em Hamley personifies Luck when they say, "Luck, you are a lady untrustworthy. / My friend one moment, foe the next" (2015).

Ellipses

Rule #13

Ellipses refer to three spaced dots (. . .) that show part of a quotation has been left out. They can be used when you want to leave out information that is not relevant to your writing. However, make sure that the exclusion does not change the quote's original meaning.

> **Example:**
> Monroe argues that, "everyone should read books…because it creates well-rounded people who can healthily function in society" (2014).

Extra Rules

Rule #14

When a quote takes up more than one paragraph, place a opening quotation mark at the beginning of each new paragraph. Only place a closing quotation mark at the end of the last quotation paragraph.

> **Example:**
> "Lulu crept down the stairs, taking care to step over the squeaky step. Once she was on the ground floor, she grabbed a coat from the closet.
>
> "Just as she was about to unlock the front door, her mother ran down the stairs and began pestering Lulu with questions."

Rule #15

If a quotation is a complete sentence, always capitalize the first word, even if it is introduced mid-sentence.

> **Example:**
> One example why *Hamilton* is a musical masterpiece is because "each character has a specific musical characteristic."

Rule #16

If a quotation is not a complete sentence, do not capitalize the first word.

Example:

I believe that high school should begin at 9 AM because researchers have found that teenagers need more sleep" to function properly (Aiden 2019).

Rule #17

Quotation marks can be used to identify: chapter titles in a book, episode titles in a TV series, song titles, and article titles.

Examples:

My favorite song from Hamilton is "You'll Be Back."

The article, "   ," by Deborah Hackles, addresses the importance of museum fieldtrips in elementary schools.

Rule #18

Quotation marks can be used when technical terms are included in a piece of writing.

Examples:

Marching bands choose one student a year to become a "drum major" whose role is to lead the students in their parade and "field show" performances.

References

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