

# QUOTATION MARKS

## Direct Quotations

Direct quotations are the **exact** words of a speaker or source, and must be enclosed in quotation marks. When using various marks of punctuation with quoted words, phrases, or sentences, follow the conventions of American printers:

Place periods and commas inside quotation marks.

She said, "I did not."

Place colons and semicolons outside quotation marks.

She said, "I did not"; I didn't know whether to believe her.

Place question marks, exclamation points, and dashes within quotation marks **when they apply only to the quoted matter**. Place them outside when they don't.

Pilate asked, "What is truth?"  
What is the meaning of the term "half-truth"?

## Quotations Within Quotations

When a direct quotation is used within another direct quotation, enclose the inner quotation in single quotation marks and the whole quotation in double quotation marks.

Jodie said, "Max keeps calling my idea 'the impossible dream.' "

## Titles

Use quotation marks for minor titles (short stories, essays, short poems, songs, episodes of a radio or television series, articles in periodicals) and subdivisions of books. Quotation marks are **not** used for book, movie, and play titles, which are italicized.

Andrew A. Rooney's *Pieces of My Mind* contains essays like "Procrastination" and "The Power of Negative Thinking."

## Special Words

Words used in an ironic sense or in a way that you or your reader may not agree with are sometimes enclosed in quotation marks.

His "castle" was a cozy little rattrap.

Words used as themselves (as words, rather than as indications of meaning) can be enclosed in quotation marks or italicized, so long as you remain consistent throughout your paper.

The words "affect" and "effect" are often confused.

## Long Quotations

When a quotation is four lines or more (MLA style) or 40 words or more (APA style), do not use quotation marks. Instead, start the entire quotation on a new line and indent it ½ inch (one tab space) from the left margin. Double-space this “block quotation” like the rest of your paper, but put the final period before any parenthetical citation at its end.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way. (Dickens, 1)

## Practice

Insert quotation marks where they are needed.

1. Dana said, Linus Pauling had a theory about Vitamin C.
2. He says that he has read David Baltimore's article The Brain of a Cell.
3. Dr. Coleman noted, Many people disagree with Jefferson’s statement, Every nation has a right to govern itself internally under what forms it pleases.
4. Clyde asked, Will you go to the opera with me?
5. Michael's favorite expression was Tell me about it!
6. Here, stoked means fantastically happy on a surfboard.
7. Last spring I discovered Frost's poem The Road Not Taken.
8. Why cry over spilled milk? she used to ask. Be glad you have the milk to spill.
9. No, Peg said, I didn't agree to do that. I may be a softy, but I haven't gone nuts yet!
10. The restaurant’s new healthy menu includes an 800-calorie salad with blue-cheese dressing.

Answers:

1. Dana said, "Linus Pauling had a theory about Vitamin C."
2. He says that he has read David Baltimore's article "The Brain of a Cell."
3. Dr. Coleman noted, "Many people disagree with Jefferson’s statement, ‘Every nation has a right to govern itself internally under what forms it pleases.’"
4. Clyde asked, "Will you go to the opera with me?"
5. Michael’s favorite expression was "Tell me about it!"
6. Here, “stoked” means fantastically happy on a surfboard.
7. Last spring I discovered Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken."
8. “Why cry over spilled milk?” she used to ask. “Be glad you have the milk to spill.”
9. "No," Peg said, "I didn't agree to do that. I may be a softy, but I haven't gone nuts yet!"
10. The restaurant’s new “healthy menu” includes an 800-calorie salad with blue-cheese dressing.

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