QUOTATIONS & PUNCTUATION

All quotations: Place the exact words of a speaker or author in quotation marks.
  • The chief executive officer left the meeting and said, “I have no comment.”
  • After the meeting, the stockholders claimed they had “no comment.”

COMMAS and PERIODS

Use a comma to signal the introduction of a quote.
  • Ms. Green said, “Finish the report by Thursday.”

Use a pair of commas when the quotation interrupts a sentence.
  • “Finish the report by Thursday,” Ms. Green said, “and you can take Friday off.”

At the end of the quote, the most common practice in the United States is to place commas and periods inside the quotation marks.
  • Each country has “rights,” and each seeks “justice.”
  • “Tomorrow,” the new supervisor promised, “you shall receive a raise.”

NOTE: You do not need a comma when you integrate the quotation so that it is grammatically part of your own sentence.
  • Thoreau argues that “shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous.”
  • According to Thoreau, people are too often “thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito’s wing that falls on the rails.”

SEMICOLONS and COLONS

Place semicolons and colons outside the quotation marks.
  • The typewriter is a “collector’s item”; in fact, it is a rare Remington.
  • The typewriter is a “collector’s items”: a rare Remington portable.
BRACKETS

Brackets [] are used to show the reader you made a necessary change to the text of the quotation, either for clarification or to alter the grammar.

- **Adding a clarifying note about the pronoun ‘he’**: “Although he [the butcher] seems to be a minor character in the work, [the butcher] provides useful insight into the common business practices of the time.”
- **Adding a note with more information**: Wallace Stevens wrote that “after the final no there comes a yes [demonstrating his optimism about the human condition]” in one of my favorite poems.
- **Changing the form of the verb from present to a gerund**: The International Criminal Court is meant to complement domestic judicial systems, “giv[ing] priority to national justice processes and embrac[ing] the primacy of each state in securing accountability for international crimes.”

QUESTION MARKS, EXCLAMINATION POINTS, DASHES and PARENTHESES

The placement of these marks depends on whether the mark is part of the quoted language. If the mark is **part of the quote, place the mark inside the quotation**. If the mark is **not part of the quote, it is placed outside the quotation**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark is Part of the Quote</th>
<th>Mark is NOT Part of the Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did I hear you ask “Why?”</td>
<td>Did I hear you say “No”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They screamed, “Run!”</td>
<td>Immediate suspension to anyone who says “No”!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Well just then I was inventing a new way of getting over the gate—,” said the Knight.</td>
<td>The lawyer shouted, “Immaterial!” – but the judge called for silence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The author remembers, “we recited our motto (“be prepared”) at the beginning of every Scout meeting.”</td>
<td>Scouts live by their motto (“be prepared”).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERNAL QUOTATION

An ‘internal quotation’ is a quote (for example, spoken by a character) within the quotation you are using. **Use single quotation marks around the internal quotation**.

- Tyler stated: “When they said ‘We won’t deliver,’ they meant they will not bring the furniture after a certain hour.”

**Final Punctuation and Internal Quotes**: If the internal quotation has a final punctuation mark, place it within the internal quotation mark.

- Tyler repeated: “Their excuse was ‘We don’t have enough time.’”
If the final punctuation mark is not part of the internal quotation, place it between the single and double quotation marks.

- Tyler asked: “What did they mean when they said, ‘We won’t deliver’?”

**ELLIPSIS**

A three-dot (point) ellipsis tells your reader you have removed words from the quotation. Academic work spaces the ellipsis points.

- “According to Jones’ research the female American alligators have a much shorter average length than the males...This accounts for their slower land speeds.”