

MPC English & Study Skills Center

Quotation Marks (“.....”)

Quotation marks are used to set off the exact written or spoken words of another person. Their use in academic writing is important to show sources of information and avoid **plagiarism** (the use of someone else’s work as the writer’s own).

Direct Quotation

📌 **Quotation marks are placed both at the beginning and end of the quoted words:**

“A penny saved is a penny earned.” (Benjamin Franklin)

📌 **The first letter of a direct quote is capitalized when it is a complete sentence:**

The weatherman said, “There will be morning clouds and evening fog.”

📌 **The second part of an interrupted quote in the same sentence is not capitalized:**

“I never saw a donut I didn’t like,” Betty said, “but donuts don’t always like me.”

📌 **A fragment of quoted material is not capitalized:**

The senator said he was “less than happy” with the outcome of the voting.

Note: Direct quotes sometimes have spelling or other errors, but the quote must be exact. To show there is an error put the Latin word *sic* in hard brackets immediately after the error. The term *sic* means “just as that” or “thus.”

The student’s journal said, “I don’t know weather [sic] or not to enroll in another course.”

Indirect Quotations

An **indirect quotation** is a **paraphrase** or a summary of someone else’s ideas; quotation marks are not used around indirect quotations. Instructors often ask students to paraphrase or summarize research material in an essay. Although indirect quotations do not require quotation marks, they still need to be properly referenced.

Mr. Kazanakis writes that the Aegean Sea is the most beautiful in the world.

The Aegean Sea is probably one of the most beautiful in the world (Kazanakis).

Quotation Marks with Other Punctuation

Where do you put the six common punctuation marks (commas, periods, question marks, semicolons, colons, question marks, and exclamation points) when words and sentences are set off with quotation marks? It depends! Think of them in groups of two.

Two marks— periods and commas—always go inside the final quotation mark:

Period: “We should have a picnic tomorrow.”

Comma: Some famous jazz pieces are “Stardust,” “Take the A Train,” and “Stompin’ at the Savoy.”

Two marks—semicolons and colons—always go outside the final quotation mark:

Semicolon: I enjoy listening to “What, What? Don’t Tell **Me**”; it is an amusing program.

Colon: I added new items to my “**Favorites**”: Facebook, Yahoo, and CNN.

Two marks—question mark and exclamation point—are placed according to meaning:

Question mark—inside (only the quote is the question):

Children in a car frequently ask, “Are we there yet?”

Question mark—outside (the entire sentence is the question):

Do you know the words to “The Star Spangled Banner”?

Exclamation point—inside (only the quote is emphasized):

The umpire yelled, “Strike one!”

Exclamation point—outside (the entire sentence is emphasized):

You must hear him recite “The Raven”!