



# WRITING CENTER

## Quotation Marks and Italics

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### QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks (" ") identify titles of short works; indicate direct quotations; are used in citing sources; recognize art, ships, newspapers, and more.

### TITLES IN QUOTATION MARKS VS. ITALICS

Depending on hierarchy, some titles are in quotation marks, while others are italicized.

- Generally, shorter works (poems, song titles, chapters) go in quotation marks, and longer works (movies, books, newspaper titles) are italicized.
  - Books are italicized, but a chapter inside a book is in quotation marks.
  - The name of a TV show is italicized, but a specific episode is in quotation marks.
- Individual episodes of television shows

**Example:** My favorite episode of *Boy Meets World* is "We'll Have a Good Time Then."

- Individual short works (short stories, essays, short poems, one-act plays, articles from periodicals)

**Example:** I think Kipling's best short story is "Without Benefit of Clergy."

- Speech titles

**Example:** I gave a speech in class called "My Local Member of Congress."

- Song titles

**Example:** Cole Porter wrote "Begin the Beguine."



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- Subdivisions or chapters of books when the title is within a collection or part of a whole  
**Example:** As part of the documentation for her library paper on Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Jessica used an article from *Saturday Review* by John Ciardi entitled "The Way to the Poem."
- In a bibliography, use quotation marks to distinguish the title of a selection from that of the whole book in which the selection is printed.  
**Example:** Faulkner, William. "Two Soldiers." *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*, Random House, 1950.

### QUOTATION MARKS FOR DIRECT QUOTES

There are detailed rules on using quotation marks to show someone's exact words.

#### DIRECT QUOTE

Quotation marks let your reader know that you are quoting directly—stating the exact words that someone has written, said, or thought.

**Examples:** I wrote, "That's all I have."

"Thomas," he said, "you can't do that!"

"Will you go to lunch with me?" the note asked. "I'll be glad to," I told my friend when I saw her. But I thought to myself, "I'd really rather eat alone."

#### PUNCTUATION FOR QUOTATION MARKS

- Put commas or periods inside quotation marks

**Example:** "Well," he said, "I'm ready for the samples."

- Other punctuation goes inside ONLY if it is part of the quoted material

**Example:** "What's up?" the laboratory assistant questioned.

- Other punctuation goes outside quotation marks

**Example:** He found the container labeled "Lunar Soil", and opened it very carefully.



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- When citing a page number after the quotation, place the comma and the period after the page citation, and thus after the quotation marks.

**Example:** When Livvie let go of old Solomon's watch, she released herself to life, and "all at once there began outside the full song of a bird" (Welty 77).

- Commas set off expressions (such as **he said**) that introduce, interrupt, or follow direct quotations.

**Example:** "Quiet, please," he said, "while the snakes are being handled."

- If the quotation is two or more sentences, a colon rather than a comma may follow the form of the expression **he said**.

**Example:** The guide explained carefully: "The snakes are being milked to prepare an antidote for snake bites.

- Use single quotation marks to mark quotations within quotations.

**Example:** "I think that 'The Dementor's Kiss' is the best chapter in the whole series," Tom said.

- Do not use quotation marks simply to draw attention to a word or phrase, except when you are referencing a specific term or discussing a specific word.

**Example:** The word "garage" comes from the French; the word "piano" comes from the Italian.

### LONG QUOTATIONS

Prose quotations of four or more lines, and poetry of three or more lines, are indented from the rest of the text and do not need quotation marks.

**Example:** At the end of Lord of the Flies, the boys realize the horror of their actions:

The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great, shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. (186)



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### QUOTING DIALOGUE OR CONVERSATION

When writing dialogue or conversation, a new paragraph begins each time the speaker changes.

**Example:** The five-year-old boy proudly announced to his younger brother, "I had a dream last night. I rode up and down on the escalator one thousand times with Mama and Daddy."

"Did I ride the escalator with you?" the brother asked hopefully.

"Nope. You weren't in the dream," the older boy responded.

"Okay, tonight I'll dream about eating five thousand chocolate ice cream cones, and you won't get any because you won't be in the dream," the smaller boy blurted out.

### QUOTATIONS MARKS FOR CITING SOURCES

- Always quote exactly and cite your quotations according to the style you are using.  
See the MLA, APA, or CMS style guides on the Writing Center website for details.
- Introduce your sources with at least one of the following:
  - The author's name
  - A description of the author (credentials, title, etc.)
  - The title of the book or article
  - The name of the journal or web site
  - A brief summary of the content
  - An expression of the role of the quotation
- Use an introductory phrase
  - In the words of Smith, . . .
  - According to Shelley, . . .
- Use the present tense
- Use a variety of introductory verbs (see below)



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### INTRODUCTORY VERBS

The following verbs can help you to introduce a quotation.

**Says:** *Introduces the quotation as information.*

adds	remarks	mentions
believes	reports	notes
comments	states	observes
describes	writes	offers
emphasizes	explains	argues

**Agrees:** *Indicates the source agrees with another source or with your position.*

accepts	concurs
assents	parallels
supports	

**Yields:** *Agrees that an opposing source is valid.*

acknowledges	concedes
admits	recognizes
allows	

**Pro:** *Argues for a position with evidence or reasons.*

argues	illustrates	maintains
contends	indicates	proposes
demonstrates	insists	shows
holds	asserts	supports

**Con:** *Argues against a source or position you are advancing.*

attacks	differs	opposes
contradicts	disagrees	refutes
denies	disputes	objects



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**Assumes:** *Makes a statement that you question or feel is incorrect.*

alleges	presumes
claims	guesses

**Implies:** *Presents information indirectly.*

hints	proposes
infers	suggests

**Concludes:** *Makes a statement that you question or feel is incorrect.*

concludes	determines
decides	finds

## ITALICS

### USE ITALICS TO IDENTIFY CERTAIN KINDS OF TITLES

Titles that are italicized are those of books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, long poems, television and radio programs, plays, works of visual art, operas and musicals, ships, and aircraft.

**Examples:** Our book club is reading *Such a Fun Age* next month.  
Do you subscribe to the *Kansas City Star*?  
My favorite painting at the Nelson-Atkins is Monet's *Water Lilies*.  
*Hamilton* was nominated for more Tony Awards than any other musical.  
The *Titanic* sank in 1912.

### USE ITALICS TO IDENTIFY FOREIGN WORDS

**Examples:** It was a *fait accompli*.  
"Do all coins say *e pluribus unum*?" she asked.