

Quoting Tips

Punctuation Introducing Quotations:

- Use a comma whenever your quote is short and you're introducing it with phrases like "she said" or "she replied": *Mark said, "Please give me my pen back."*
- Use a colon when:
 - (1) You will use a quote to illustrate or prove a statement you made:
Gabriel Garcia-Marquez' skillful use of magical realism allows the reader to plunge itself in the scene: "He's an angel, he must have been coming for the child, but the poor fellow is so old that the rain knocked him down."
 - (2) When the quote is longer than one sentence; or
 - (3) When you're indenting the quote because it is too long, i.e. block quotes

Punctuation at the End of Quotations:

- Commas and periods always go **INSIDE** closing quotation marks, even if the comma or period wasn't part of the original quotation.
Did I write "rain"? I meant "reign." No, not "rein," and certainly not "rain."
- Colons and semicolons go **OUTSIDE** closing quotations marks. As do exclamation points and question marks- if they weren't part of the quotation.
Oscar Wilde remarked, "Truth is never pure, and rarely simple"; half-truths,
What does he mean by "a spy in the enemy's country"?

Ellipses

- Ellipsis points, three spaced periods (. . .), indicate an omission of a word or words in a quotation
- If you end your sentence with a quotation that has an ellipsis at the end, you must add your **OWN** final punctuation mark. The ellipsis does not double as a period.
"He wanted to continue speaking about worms, but no one wanted to know more of them. . . ."
- While quoting if you wish to omit some words or lines, use the ellipsis and then continue with the rest of the quote.
Ray Bradbury famously remarked that, "if I were asked to name the most important items in a writer's make-up, ... I could only warn him to look to his zest, see to his gusto.... If you are writing without zest, without gusto, without love, you are only half a writer."
- If you want to express a trailing off thought, use the ellipsis without a final period at the end of the sentence, and skip a space before the first period:
"Well, whatever . . ."

Editorial Insertions (Square Brackets)

- Whenever you want to insert a brief note or clarification into a quote, use brackets **NOT** parentheses. Parentheses are used when the author makes their own inserts.

George Eliot says of Dorothea, "she felt that she enjoyed it [horseback-riding] in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it" (Middlemarch, I.i).