

Using Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used to mark direct quotations, direct speech, or a literal title or name.

KEY POINTS

- Quotation points distinguish words that are exhibited as those of another author or speaker.
- A quotation within a quotation is usually marked with single points, which, when both are employed, are placed within the others.
- You can set off words by using quotation marks instead of italicizing or underlining them.

TERM

- [Quotation mark](#)
In English writing, quotation marks or inverted commas (informally referred to as quotes or speech marks) are punctuation marks surrounding a quotation, direct speech, or a literal title or name

EXAMPLE

- **EXAMPLE OF QUOTATION MARK USAGE**
- -- The man turned to his friend to say, "Have you seen anything like this before? "
- Rule: Quotation marks are used to mark direct quotations. If the quote is multiple paragraphs, then a quotation mark should be placed at the beginning of each paragraph and also at the end of the quote. As the example demonstrates, punctuation marks are commonly placed inside the quotation marks, though, depending on the context, there are instances where questionmarks or exclamation marks are placed outside the quoted material.
- -- We call my friend Frank "Little Frank. " He wrote a short story called, "The Tales of Little Frank. "
- Rule: Quotation marks are used to mark nicknames and titles of poems, short stories, chapter names, journal papers, newspaper articles; generally, minor works or works within a larger publication are marked by quotation marks rather than italicized like the title of novels, for example.
- -- The word "cheese" is derived from an Old English word.

- Rule: Quotation marks can be used to emphasize that an instance of a word refers to the word itself rather than its associated concept. In the example, it is the word "cheese" that is the subject, not the dairy product cheese.
- -- He shared his "insights" with us about the progress of history.
- Rule: Quotation marks can be used to indicate irony, or to mark that a word is being used in a special case. In these cases, the quotation marks call attention to a neologism, slang, or special terminology, or they can indicate words or phrases that are descriptive but unusual, colloquial, folksy, startling, humorous, metaphoric, or contain a pun.

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Quotation marks are used to mark direct quotations, direct speech, or a literal title or name. Quotation marks can also be used to indicate a use-mention distinction or unusual usage of a word or phrase, and are sometimes used to express irony.

Single or double quotation marks denote either speech or a quotation. Double quotes are preferred in the United States. Regardless, the style of opening and closing quotation marks must be matched. For example:

- 'Good morning, Frank,' said Hal.
- "Good morning, Frank," said Hal.

For speech within speech, the other style is used as inner quotation marks. For example:

- 'Hal said, "Good morning, Dave,"' recalled Frank.
- "Hal said, 'Good morning, Dave,'" recalled Frank.

In most cases, quotations that span multiple paragraphs should be set as block quotations, and thus do not require quotation marks. When quotation marks are used for multiple-paragraph quotations, the convention in English is to give opening quotation marks to the first and each subsequent paragraph, using closing quotation marks only for the final paragraph of the quotation.

When quoted text is interrupted, such as with the phrase *he said*, a closing quotation mark is used before the interruption, and an opening quotation mark is used after the interruption. Commas are also often used before and after the interruption. For example:

- "Hal," noted Frank, "said that everything was going extremely well. "

Quotation marks are not used for paraphrased speech because a paraphrase is not a direct quote.

Titles and Nicknames

As a rule, a whole publication would be italicized, whereas the titles of minor works within, or a subset of, the larger publication (such as poems, short stories, named chapters, journal papers, newspaper articles, TV show episodes, editorial sections of websites, etc.) would be written with quotation marks. For example:

- Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*
- Dahl's "Taste" in *Completely Unexpected Tales*
- Arthur C. Clarke's "The Sentinel"
- The first chapter of *3001: The Final Odyssey* is "Comet Cowboy"
- "Extra-Terrestrial Relays," *Wireless World*, October 1945
- David Bowie's song "Space Oddity" from the album *David Bowie*

Quotation marks can also offset a nickname embedded in an actual name, or a false or ironic title embedded in an actual title. For example:

- Nat "King" Cole
- Miles "Tails" Prower
- Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson

Use-Mention Distinctions

Either quotation marks or italic type can emphasize that an instance of a word refers to the word itself rather than its associated concept.

- Cheese is derived from milk.
- "Cheese" is derived from a word in Old English.
- Cheese has calcium, protein, and phosphorus.
- *Cheese* has three e's.

A three-way distinction is occasionally made between normal use of a word (no quotation marks), the concept behind the word (single quotation marks), and the word itself (double quotation marks):

- When discussing 'use,' use "use. "

Unusual Usage

Quotes indicating verbal irony or other special use are sometimes called scare quotes. For example:

- He shared his "wisdom" with me.
- The lunch lady plopped a glob of "food" onto my tray.

Quotation marks are also sometimes used to indicate that the writer realizes that a word is not being used in its current commonly accepted sense. In these cases, the quotation marks can call attention to a neologism, slang, or special terminology, or they can indicate words or phrases that are descriptive but unusual, colloquial, folksy, startling, humorous, metaphoric, or contain a pun. For example:

- Crystals somehow "know" which shape to grow into.
- I hope your diving meet goes "swimmingly! "

Using quotation marks in these ways should be avoided when possible.

Punctuation

In English, question marks and exclamation marks are placed inside or outside quoted material depending on whether they apply to the whole sentence or just the quoted portion, but colons and semicolons are always placed outside.

- Did he say, "Good morning, Dave"?
- No, he said, "Where are you, Dave? "
- "Is there anybody out there? " she asked into the void.
- There are three major definitions of the word "gender": vernacular, sociological, and linguistic.

In American English, commas and periods are usually placed inside quotation marks, except in the few cases where they may cause serious ambiguity. For example:

- "Carefree," in general, means "free from care or anxiety. "
- The name of the song was "Gloria," which many already knew.
- She said she felt "free from care and anxiety. "
- "Today," said the Prime Minister, "I feel free from care and anxiety. "
- To use a long dash on Wikipedia, type in "—".