

QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks are a type of punctuation that are used when quoting a person or source in your writing and to signify titles of certain texts. It is important to note that double quotation marks (“ ”) and single quotation marks (‘ ’) are used differently in different contexts.

DOUBLE QUOTATION MARKS

Generally, double quotation marks are the more common of the two and can be seen most often in academic writing when directly quoting an author or source. When writing creatively, double quotation marks can be used to indicate speech. Examples of uses of double quotation marks:

- Critic Gia Halliot argues that “Dostoevsky’s women are, ultimately, mere shadows of their male counterparts.”
- “You are completely insufferable,” replied Mrs. Henderson.

SINGLE QUOTATION MARKS

In academic writing, single quotation marks are **only** used when there is a quote within a quote; they are always used within a set of double quotation marks. This occurs when, in academic writing, the author you are quoting has quoted someone else and, in creative writing, when a character or speaker is quoting another person. Examples of uses of single quotation marks:

- In her review of scholarly articles on Dostoevsky’s depiction of women, scholar Harriet Julian states, “It is important to note that Gia Halliot, one of the most significant critics in the field, claims that ‘Dostoevsky’s women are, ultimately, mere shadows of their male counterparts.’”
- Marianne said, “When I was speaking to Mrs. Henderson, she told me ‘you are completely insufferable.’”

ADDITIONAL USES OF QUOTATION MARKS

Text titles

Another common use of quotation marks is to indicate titles of shorter works or smaller titled sections of longer works. In APA and MLA style, titles of journal articles, book chapters, episodes of a television show or webseries, webpages, short stories, poems, and book chapters are placed inside double quotation marks within your text.

Keep in mind that such titles are typically not placed in quotation marks when listed on an APA Reference Page. Make sure that you double check the relevant stylebook to ensure correct usage in a particular style.

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Scare quotes

Quotation marks can also be used to indicate scare quotes. Scare quotes are similar to air quotes. They indicate that you do not necessarily agree with the word or phrase you are using, that you are using it sarcastically, or that you are using it in an unusual way. Example of a scare quote:

- The conspiracy theorist claims that this inconsistency is “evidence” of Illuminati involvement.

Sometimes, writers will use single quotation marks to set words apart or to create an emphasis on certain words, but this is not technically correct. Often, this emphasis can be done more effectively through capitalizing or italicizing the word.

PUNCTUATION WITH QUOTATION MARKS

Certain punctuation belongs inside quotation marks while some belongs outside. Commas and periods always belong inside quotation marks, and semicolons and colons always belong outside quotation marks.

Question marks and exclamation points belong outside the quotation marks if you are adding them in, but inside the quotation marks if they are part of the original quoted material.

Examples of different punctuation with quotation marks:

- The study aimed to find out if “mice can learn verbal commands”; therefore, the scientists tested on live mice.
- Did the scientists answer the question of whether “mice can learn verbal commands”?
- I am interested to know if “mice can learn verbal commands,” but the study is too long for me to read.
- The study conclusively showed that “mice can learn verbal commands.”