

## **3.7. QUOTATIONS**

### **3.7.1. Use and Accuracy of Quotations**

Quotations are effective in research papers when used selectively. Quote only words, phrases, lines, and passages that are particularly interesting, vivid, unusual, or apt, and keep all quotations as brief as possible. Overquotation can bore your readers and might lead them to conclude that you are neither an original thinker nor a skillful writer.

The accuracy of quotations in research writing is extremely important. They must reproduce the original sources exactly. Unless indicated in brackets or parentheses (see 3.7.6), changes must not be made in the spelling, capitalization, or interior punctuation of the

source. You must construct a clear, grammatically correct sentence that allows you to introduce or incorporate a quotation with complete accuracy. Alternatively, you may paraphrase the original and quote only fragments, which may be easier to integrate into the text. If you change a quotation in any way, make the alteration clear to the reader, following the rules and recommendations below.

### 3.7.2. Prose

If a prose quotation runs no more than four lines and requires no special emphasis, put it in quotation marks and incorporate it into the text.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," wrote Charles Dickens of the eighteenth century.

You need not always reproduce complete sentences. Sometimes you may want to quote just a word or phrase as part of your sentence.

For Charles Dickens the eighteenth century was both "the best of times" and "the worst of times."

You may put a quotation at the beginning, middle, or end of your sentence or, for the sake of variety or better style, divide it by your own words.

Joseph Conrad writes of the company manager in *Heart of Darkness*, "He was obeyed, yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect."

OR

"He was obeyed," writes Joseph Conrad of the company manager in *Heart of Darkness*, "yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect."

If a quotation ending a sentence requires a parenthetical reference, place the sentence period after the reference. (For more information on punctuating quotations, see 3.7.7.)

For Charles Dickens the eighteenth century was both "the best of times" and "the worst of times" (35).

"He was obeyed," writes Joseph Conrad of the company manager in *Heart of Darkness*, "yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect" (87).

If a quotation extends to more than four lines when run into the text, set it off from your text by beginning a new line, indenting one inch from the left margin, and typing it double-spaced, without adding quotation marks. A colon generally introduces a quotation displayed in this way, though sometimes the context may require a different mark of punctuation or none at all. If you quote only a single paragraph or part of one, do not indent the first line more than the rest. A parenthetical reference for a prose quotation set off from the text follows the last line of the quotation.

At the conclusion of *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph and the other 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)

If you need to quote two or more paragraphs, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional quarter inch. If the first sentence quoted does not begin a paragraph in the source, however, do not indent it the additional amount. Indent only the first lines of the successive paragraphs.

In *Moll Flanders* Defoe maintains the pseudoautobiographical narration typical of the picaresque tradition:

My true name is so well known in the records, or registers, at Newgate and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there relating to my particular conduct, that it is not to be expected I should set my name or the account of my family to this work. . . .

It is enough to tell you, that . . . some of my worst comrades, who are out of the way of doing me harm . . . know me by the name of Moll Flanders. . . . (1)

On omitting words within quotations, see 3.7.5. For translations of quotations, see 3.7.8.

### 3.7.3. Poetry

If you quote part or all of a single line of verse that does not require special emphasis, put it in quotation marks within your text. You may also incorporate two or three lines in this way, using a slash with a space on each side ( / ) to separate them.

Bradstreet frames the poem with a sense of mortality: "All things within this fading world hath end" (1).

Reflecting on the "incident" in Baltimore, Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all that I remember" (11-12).

Verse quotations of more than three lines should begin on a new line. Unless the quotation involves unusual spacing, indent each line one inch from the left margin and double-space between lines, adding no quotation marks that do not appear in the original. A parenthetical reference for a verse quotation set off from the text follows the last line of the quotation (as in quotations of prose); a parenthetical reference that will not fit on the line should appear on a new line, flush with the right margin of the page.

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" is rich in evocative detail:

It was winter. It got dark  
early. The waiting room  
was full of grown-up people,  
arctics and overcoats,  
lamps and magazines. (6-10)

A line that is too long to fit within the right margin should be continued on the next line and the continuation indented an additional quarter inch. You may reduce the indentation of the quotation to less than one inch from the left margin if doing so will eliminate the need for such continuations. If the spatial arrangement of the original lines, including indentation and spacing within and between them, is unusual, reproduce it as accurately as possible.

E. E. Cummings concludes the poem with this vivid description of a carefree scene, reinforced by the carefree form of the lines themselves:

it's  
spring



and  
the  
goat-footed  
balloonMan      whistles  
far  
and  
wee (16-24)

When a verse quotation begins in the middle of a line, the partial line should be positioned where it is in the original and not shifted to the left margin.

In "I Sit and Sew," by Alice Dunbar-Nelson, the speaker laments that social convention compels her to sit uselessly while her male compatriots lie in need on the battlefield:

My soul in pity flings  
Appealing cries, yearning only to go  
There in that holocaust of hell, those fields of woe—  
But—I must sit and sew. (11-14)

For translations of quotations, see 3.7.8.

#### 3.7.4. Drama

If you quote dialogue between two or more characters in a play, set the quotation off from your text. Begin each part of the dialogue with the appropriate character's name indented one inch from the left margin and written in all capital letters: HAMLET. Follow the name with a period, and start the quotation. Indent all subsequent lines in that character's speech an additional quarter inch. When the dialogue shifts to another character, start a new line indented one inch from the left margin. Maintain this pattern throughout the entire quotation.

Marguerite Duras's screenplay for *Hiroshima mon amour* suggests at the outset the profound difference between observation and experience:

HE. You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing.

SHE. I saw *everything*. *Everything*. . . . The hospital, for instance, I saw it. I'm sure I did. There is a hospital in Hiroshima. How could I help seeing it?

HE. You did not see the hospital in Hiroshima. You saw nothing  
in Hiroshima. (2505-06)

A short time later Lear loses the final symbol of his former power, the  
soldiers who make up his train:

GONERIL. Hear me, my lord.

What need you five-and-twenty, ten or five,  
To follow in a house where twice so many  
Have a command to tend you?

REGAN. What need one?

LEAR. O, reason not the need! (2.4.254-58)

In general, stage directions are treated like other quoted text: they should be reproduced exactly as they appear in the original source (see 3.7.1). When stage directions interrupt the grammatical sense of your sentence, they may be replaced with an ellipsis (see 3.7.5). For the other aspects of formatting, follow the recommendations above for quoting prose and poetry (3.7.2–3).

### 3.7.5. Ellipsis

Whenever you wish to omit a word, a phrase, a sentence, or more from a quoted passage, you should be guided by two principles: fairness to the author quoted and the grammatical integrity of your writing. A quotation should never be presented in a way that could cause a reader to misunderstand the sentence structure of the original source. If you quote only a word or a phrase, it will be obvious that you left out some of the original sentence.

In his inaugural address, John F. Kennedy spoke of a "new frontier."

But if omitting material from the original sentence or sentences leaves a quotation that appears to be a sentence or a series of sentences, you must use ellipsis points, or three spaced periods, to indicate that your quotation does not completely reproduce the original. Whenever you omit words from a quotation, the resulting passage—your prose and the quotation integrated into it—should be grammatically complete and correct.

For an ellipsis within a sentence, use three periods with a space before each and a space after the last ( . . . ).

## ORIGINAL

Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stressed air as the communicator of disease, ignoring sanitation or visible carriers. (Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century* [1978; New York: Ballantine, 1979, print; 101–02])

## QUOTATION WITH AN ELLIPSIS IN THE MIDDLE

In surveying various responses to plagues in the Middle Ages, Barbara W. Tuchman writes, "Medical thinking . . . stressed air as the communicator of disease, ignoring sanitation or visible carriers" (101-02).

When the ellipsis coincides with the end of your sentence, use three periods with a space before each following a sentence period—that is, four periods, with no space before the first or after the last.

## QUOTATION WITH AN ELLIPSIS AT THE END

In surveying various responses to plagues in the Middle Ages, Barbara W. Tuchman writes, "Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stressed air as the communicator of disease. . . ."

If a parenthetical reference follows the ellipsis at the end of your sentence, however, use three periods with a space before each, and place the sentence period after the final parenthesis.

## QUOTATION WITH AN ELLIPSIS AT THE END FOLLOWED BY A PARENTHETICAL REFERENCE

In surveying various responses to plagues in the Middle Ages, Barbara W. Tuchman writes, "Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stressed air as the communicator of disease . . ." (101-02).

In a quotation of more than one sentence, an ellipsis in the middle can indicate the omission of any amount of text.

## ORIGINAL

Presidential control reached its zenith under Andrew Jackson, the extent of whose attention to the press even before he became a candidate is suggested by the fact that he subscribed to twenty newspapers. Jackson was never content to have only one organ grinding out his tune. For a time, the *United States Telegraph* and the *Washington Globe* were almost equally favored as party organs, and there were fifty-seven journalists on the government payroll. (William L. Rivers, *The Mass Media: Reporting, Writing, Editing* [2nd ed.; New York: Harper, 1975; print; 7])

## QUOTATION OMITTING A SENTENCE

In discussing the historical relation between politics and the press, William L. Rivers notes:

Presidential control reached its zenith under Andrew Jackson, the extent of whose attention to the press even before he became a candidate is suggested by the fact that he subscribed to twenty newspapers. . . . For a time, the *United States Telegraph* and the *Washington Globe* were almost equally favored as party organs, and there were fifty-seven journalists on the government payroll. (7)

## QUOTATION WITH AN OMISSION FROM THE MIDDLE OF ONE SENTENCE TO THE END OF ANOTHER

In discussing the historical relation between politics and the press, William L. Rivers notes, "Presidential control reached its zenith under Andrew Jackson. . . . For a time, the *United States Telegraph* and the *Washington Globe* were almost equally favored as party organs, and there were fifty-seven journalists on the government payroll" (7).

## QUOTATION WITH AN OMISSION FROM THE MIDDLE OF ONE SENTENCE TO THE MIDDLE OF ANOTHER

In discussing the historical relation between politics and the press, William L. Rivers notes that when presidential control "reached its zenith under Andrew Jackson, . . . there were fifty-seven journalists on the government payroll" (7).

The omission of words and phrases from quotations of poetry is also indicated by three or four spaced periods (as in quotations of prose).

## ORIGINAL

In Worcester, Massachusetts,  
I went with Aunt Consuelo  
to keep her dentist's appointment  
and sat and waited for her  
in the dentist's waiting room.  
It was winter. It got dark  
early. The waiting room .  
was full of grown-up people,  
arctics and overcoats,  
lamps and magazines.

(Elizabeth Bishop, "In the Waiting Room" [*Poets.org*; Acad. of Amer. Poets, n.d.; Web; 30 May 2008; lines 1–10])



## QUOTATION WITH AN ELLIPSIS AT THE END

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" is rich in evocative detail:

In Worcester, Massachusetts,  
I went with Aunt Consuelo  
to keep her dentist's appointment  
and sat and waited for her  
in the dentist's waiting room.  
It was winter. It got dark  
early. The waiting room  
was full of grown-up people. . . . (1-8)

The omission of a line or more in the middle of a poetry quotation that is set off from the text is indicated by a line of spaced periods approximately the length of a complete line of the quoted poem.

## QUOTATION OMITTING A LINE OR MORE IN THE MIDDLE

Elizabeth Bishop's "In the Waiting Room" is rich in evocative detail:

In Worcester, Massachusetts,  
I went with Aunt Consuelo  
to keep her dentist's appointment  
.....  
It was winter. It got dark  
early. (1-3, 6-7)

In this example, the quotation ends in the middle of a line and at the end of a sentence. You do not need to indicate with an ellipsis that more material appears on the line in the original.

If the author you are quoting uses ellipsis points, you should distinguish them from your ellipses by putting square brackets around the ones you add or by including an explanatory phrase in parentheses after the quotation.

## ORIGINAL

"We live in California, my husband and I, Los Angeles. . . . This is beautiful country; I have never been here before." (N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn* [1968; New York: Perennial-Harper, 1977; print; 29])

## QUOTATION WITH AN ADDED ELLIPSIS

In N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, when Mrs. St. John arrives at

the rectory, she tells Father Olguin, "We live in California, my husband and I, Los Angeles. . . . This is beautiful country [. . .]" (29).

or

In N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, when Mrs. St. John arrives at the rectory, she tells Father Olguin, "We live in California, my husband and I, Los Angeles. . . . This is beautiful country . . ." (29; 1st ellipsis in orig.).

### 3.7.6. Other Alterations of Sources

Occasionally, you may decide that a quotation will be unclear or confusing to your reader unless you provide supplementary information. For example, you may need to insert material missing from the original, to add *sic* (from the Latin for "thus" or "so") to assure readers that the quotation is accurate even though the spelling or logic might make them think otherwise, or to italicize words for emphasis. While such contributions to a quotation are permissible, you should keep them to a minimum and make sure to distinguish them from the original, usually by explaining them in parentheses after the quotation or by putting them in square brackets within the quotation.

A comment or an explanation that immediately follows the closing quotation mark appears in parentheses.

Shaw admitted, "Nothing can extinguish my interest in Shakespear" (sic).

Lincoln specifically advocated a government "*for* the people" (emphasis added).

A comment or an explanation that goes inside the quotation must appear within square brackets, not parentheses.

He claimed he could provide "hundreds of examples [of court decisions] to illustrate the historical tension between church and state."

Milton's Satan speaks of his "study [pursuit] of revenge."

Similarly, if a pronoun in a quotation seems unclear, you may add an identification in square brackets.

In the first act he soliloquizes, "Why she would hang on him [Hamlet's father] / As if increase of appetite had grown / By what it fed on. . . ."

### 3.7.7. Punctuation with Quotations

Whether set off from the text or run into it, quoted material is usually preceded by a colon if the quotation is formally introduced and by a comma or no punctuation if the quotation is an integral part of the sentence structure.

Shelley held a bold view: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

Shelley thought poets "the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

"Poets," according to Shelley, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

Do not use opening and closing quotation marks to enclose quotations set off from the text, but reproduce any quotation marks that are in the passage quoted.

In "Memories of West Street and Lepke," Robert Lowell, a conscientious objector (or "C.O."), recounts meeting a Jehovah's Witness in prison:

I was so out of things, I'd never heard  
of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Are you a C.O.?" I asked a fellow jailbird.

"No," he answered, "I'm a J.W." (36-39)

Use double quotation marks around quotations incorporated into the text, single quotation marks around quotations within those quotations.

In "Memories of West Street and Lepke," Robert Lowell, a conscientious objector (or "C.O."), recounts meeting a Jehovah's Witness in prison: "Are you a C.O.?" I asked a fellow jailbird. / 'No,' he answered, 'I'm a J.W.'" (38-39).

When a quotation consists entirely of material enclosed by quotation marks in the source work, usually one pair of double quotation marks is sufficient, provided that the introductory wording makes clear the special character of the quoted material.

Meeting a fellow prisoner, Lowell asks, "Are you a C.O.?" (38).

Except for changing internal double quotation marks to single ones when you incorporate quotations into your text, you should reproduce internal punctuation exactly as in the original. The closing punctuation, though, depends on where the quoted material appears in your sentence. Suppose, for example, that you want to quote the following sentence: "You've got to be carefully taught." If you begin your sentence with this line, you have to replace the closing period with a punctuation mark appropriate to the new context.

"You've got to be carefully taught," wrote Oscar Hammerstein II about how racial prejudice is perpetuated.

If the quotation ends with a question mark or an exclamation point, however, the original punctuation is retained, and no comma is required.

"How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form?" wonders the doctor in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (42).

"What a wonderful little almanac you are, Celia!" Dorothea Brooke responds to her sister (7).

By convention, commas and periods that directly follow quotations go inside the closing quotation marks, but a parenthetical reference should intervene between the quotation and the required punctuation. Thus, if a quotation ends with a period, the period appears after the reference.

N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* begins with an image that also concludes the novel: "Abel was running" (7).

If a quotation ends with both single and double quotation marks, the comma or period precedes both.

"The poem alludes to Stevens's 'Sunday Morning,'" notes Miller.

All other punctuation marks—such as semicolons, colons, question marks, and exclamation points—go outside a closing quotation mark, except when they are part of the quoted material.

ORIGINAL

I believe taxation without representation is tyranny!



## QUOTATIONS

He attacked "taxation without representation" (32).

Did he attack "taxation without representation"?

What dramatic events followed his attack on "taxation without representation"!

but

He declared, "I believe taxation without representation is tyranny!"

If a quotation ending with a question mark or an exclamation point concludes your sentence and requires a parenthetical reference, retain the original punctuation within the quotation mark and follow with the reference and the sentence period outside the quotation mark.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the doctor wonders, "How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form?" (42).

Dorothea Brooke responds to her sister, "What a wonderful little almanac you are, Celia!" (7).

### 3.7.8. Translations of Quotations

If you believe that a significant portion of your audience will not be familiar with the language of a quotation you present, you should add a translation. If the translation is not yours, give its source in addition to the source of the quotation. In general, the translation should immediately follow the quotation whether they are run into or set off from the text, although their order may be reversed if most readers will not likely be able to read the original. If the quotation is run into the text, use double quotation marks around a translation placed in parentheses following the quotation but single quotation marks around a translation that immediately follows without intervening punctuation.

At the opening of Dante's *Inferno*, the poet finds himself in "una selva oscura" ("a dark wood"; 1.2; Ciardi 28).

At the opening of Dante's *Inferno*, the poet finds himself in "una selva oscura" 'a dark wood' (1.2; Ciardi 28).