

Using Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used to enclose direct quotes. They are also used for certain titles and to highlight words used an unconventional way.

Direct Quotes

A direct quote reports, in exact words, what someone wrote or spoke. Use double quotation marks at the beginning and ending of a direct quote.

Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

Parker wrote, "Kennedy's inaugural speech helped restore patriotism in the hearts of millions."

Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote within a quote:

Parker also wrote, "Today's society would do well to remember President John F. Kennedy's inaugural message: 'Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.'"

Titles

Put quotation marks around certain titles, usually titles of works that are part of a larger work and titles of unpublished works, such as reports and manuscripts. These include the following:

Song titles ("Celebration")	Essays ("Politics and the English Language")	Periodical articles ("My Goodness, Your Badness")
Short stories ("Luck")	Web pages or documents ("Stanford Web Credibility Research")	Book subdivisions ("Thoughts About Thought")
Short poems ("Renaissance")	TV & radio program episodes ("Occam's Razor")	Reports ("Coyote Valley Specific Plan EIR")

Words

Use quotation marks to enclose words being used in an unconventional or ironic way. For unfamiliar, technical, or foreign words used and defined for the first time, use italics for the word itself. Then, if there is a translation, use quotation marks:

His "diplomacy" alienated the whole department.
The Spanish word *hablar* means "to speak."

Punctuation with quotation marks

Commas and periods always go inside quotation marks. Colons and semicolons always go outside. Dashes, question marks, and exclamation points go inside or outside the quotation marks, depending on whether the emotion expressed belongs to the quoted material or to the person citing the material:

"I think, therefore I am," he said. What does it mean to say, "I think, therefore I am"?
He said, "I think, therefore I am." "What do you think about that?"
Descartes said, "Cogito ergo sum": "I think, therefore I am."
Your conclusions are limited by "I think, therefore I am"; you cannot prove the existence of anything outside yourself.

Contributed by Sheila March

