

Bracken Business Communications Clinic

PUNCTUATION

QUOTATION MARKS (“...” or ‘...’)

Quotation marks are used to enclose and set off text that is directly quoted, titles, technical terms, and words or phrases that carry a subtext.

USES

Use quotation marks to enclose

- a short direct quote (a quote of no more than 40 words).
- a title of short works, such as titles of articles, essays, book chapters, songs, films, and poems.
- a word or short phrase that is meant to express irony or sarcasm.
- slang that is out of character with the rest of the writing or to enclose a deliberate misspelling.

Do **not** use quotation marks to enclose

- a colloquial expression.
- a long direct quote (a quote more than 40 words).
 - Set apart a long quote by indenting five spaces from both margins and introducing the quote with a colon.
- an indirect quotation, which is usually introduced by *that*.
e.g., The meteorologist said that it will rain tomorrow. < Correct (indirect quote)
The meteorologist said that, “it will rain tomorrow.” < Incorrect (indirect quote)
The meteorologist said, “It will rain tomorrow.” < Correct (direct quote)

PLACEMENT OF PUNCTUATION WHEN USING QUOTATION MARKS

Punctuation placed inside quotation marks

- Periods, commas, question marks, and exclamation marks are enclosed within quotation marks.
 - Exception: If the question or exclamation mark punctuates the sentence as a whole, the question mark or exclamation mark falls outside the quotation marks.
e.g., Have you heard the proverb, “Do not count your chickens until they hatch”?

Punctuation placed outside quotation marks

- Colons and semi-colons appear outside quotation marks.
- Parentheses with in-text citation fall outside quotation marks.

Note: Never duplicate punctuation. When the quoted sentence uses the same punctuation as the main sentence, enclose the punctuation within the quotation marks.

SINGLE QUOTATION MARKS

- Use single quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation within another direct quotation.
- Insert a space between the single and the double quotation.
- Apply the rules for placement of punctuation provided above.

e.g., Dorothy Parker once said, “The most beautiful words in the English language are ‘Check enclosed.’ ”