



QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation marks are used in a variety of situations as described below. Generally, when a quotation mark falls at the end of a clause or sentence, place periods and commas inside the quotation mark.

- My instructor assigned us a new story entitled “Signs and Symbols.”
- When I read “Signs and Symbols,” I was reminded of a story from my childhood.

When you use MLA style for in-text citations, the period follows the citation in parentheses.

- Margaret Jones, in her essay on sign language, says that “anyone who really wants to learn sign language can do so relatively easily” (101).

20a

Signal titles of short works

Quotation marks are used to enclose the titles of short works, including poems, short stories, lectures, book chapters, song titles, magazine articles, newspaper articles, encyclopedia entries, and television/radio episodes.

- “Pedestrians Not Permitted on this Highway” – a poem by Jackson H. Day
- “Signs and Symbols” – a short story by Vladimir Nabokov
- “The Signs of Life” – a lecture by Augustus D. Waller, MD

- ➔ “Signs Inconjunct” – a book chapter by Ptolemy
- ➔ “Signs” – a song by Five Man Electrical Band
- ➔ “Swine Flu Myth: The Symptoms Are Like Regular Flu” – a magazine article
- ➔ “CDC: Swine Flu Outbreak Signs Encouraging” – a newspaper article
- ➔ “Sign Language (Communications)” – an encyclopedia entry
- ➔ “Born Under a Bad Sign” – episode from television’s *Supernatural*

Helpful hint

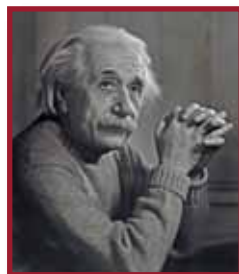
To highlight the title of a larger or longer work, use italics. Thus, you should italicize the titles of poetry collections, short story collections, anthologies, books, albums/CDs, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, television series, and radio series.

20b

Set off a direct quotation

Quotation marks are also used to set off direct quotations.

- ➔ “The thunderstorm last night was the first sign of spring,” said the ABC weatherman.
- ➔ Albert Einstein said, “The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.”



20c

Set off dialogue in prose

Quotation marks are used to set off dialogue. Be sure to use a separate paragraph for each speaker, and use quotation marks around everything each person says.

- ➔ from *Signs* (2002 film):
“What kind of a machine bends a stalk of corn without breaking it?” asked Officer Caroline.

Graham responded, “It can’t be by hand; it’s too perfect.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Quotation marks were first used in printing during the middle of the 16th century. Up to the 18th century, some printers would repeat the quotation mark at the beginning of every line in a long quotation. When printers stopped this repetition of the quotation mark at the beginning of every line, the empty left margin was left behind, giving the modern form of the indented block quotation.



20d

Share a few lines of poetry

Quotation marks are used when quoting four or fewer lines of poetry. Be sure to enclose all material from the poem in quotation marks, and use a slash—with a space on each side of the slash—to show where the original line was divided. When quoting material from a source, be sure to give the documentation information.

- I cannot help but compare my visit to the lines of one of my favorite poems by Jackson H. Day called “Wesley Theological Seminary: No Thoroughfare”: “**O you who see this sign, pray it may go/And all it represents; and later, lo/This path can be the broadest thoroughfare**” (II.4-6).

20e

Share personal thoughts

- During the visit, I could not help but compare my reception to the metaphor of a favorite poem: “**I wish these people would think about how they could create the broadest of thoroughfares.**”

20f

Signal something being discussed, defined, or used in an unusual or ironic manner

- I never thought there were so many sentences with the word “**sign**” in them.

- ➔ Joe has been “**signing off**” to his girlfriend lately, meaning that he has been showing off.
- ➔ At the bar, when Joe said his “**sign**” meant he was open for business, I had to laugh.

Helpful hint

When you want to place a quotation within a quotation, use single quotation marks within double quotation marks.

- ➔ “What would you suggest I do when I’m feeling frustrated at being left out of things?” Mark asked his friend, the 60s fan.
- ➔ His friend replied, “I’d go and listen to ‘Signs’ by the Five Man Electrical Band.”



What’s wrong with this sign?

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Add quotation marks and capital letters where needed.

1. What does a red sky mean? asked my friend John.
2. I asked when did you see the red sky? The time of day can influence the meaning of red sky.
3. Shakespeare has a quotation in his play *Venus and Adonis* about a red morn.
4. An old adage about sailing during a red sky says red sky at night, sailor's delight. red sky in morning, sailor's warning.
5. Malcolm Coleman even wrote a poem entitled red sky.

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