



# Formatting Quotations

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## Quotations less than 4 lines

### A) Incorporate quotation into the sentence structure without punctuation

- use quotation marks
- no comma

1. Lipsitz believes that the “‘new social history’ of the past decade” has “used the everyday life experiences of ordinary people as a basis for generalization about entire societies” (183).
2. James B. Twitchell, in *Carnival Culture*, claims that “the jargon of American television culture has become the *lingua franca* of the world” (28).

**ex. 1:** Note the single quotation marks around “new social history”: this is generally used when using quotations within quotations.

**ex. 2:** The quotation is a full sentence; however, the capitalization on “The jargon [...]” has been changed to accommodate the quotation in the new sentence structure. Notice that the Latin phrase has been italicized; use this procedure for foreign phrases in the body of an essay.

### B) Introduce a quotation with a short phrase, often using an active verb (e.g. advise, assert, comment, conclude, demonstrate, remark, etc.) in past or present tense

- use a comma before quotation
- use quotation marks

3. Welleck admits in his multi-volume history of modern literary criticism, “An evolutionary history of criticism must fail. I have come to this resigned conclusion” (Welleck 5: xxii).
4. Aristotle remarked, “The good of man must be the end [objective] of the science of politics” (qtd. in Kaufmann 481).

**ex. 3:** The quotation is a full sentence, so the capitalization from the original was preserved. This is the standard practice when using this construction.

**ex.3 & 4:** Quotations are treated as independent clauses, so the inserted material is set off by a comma.

**ex.4:** Note the square brackets for inserted material that clarifies the meaning of the word “end.”

**C) Insert** a short phrase within a quotation  
use commas before and after the inserted phrase  
use quotation marks

5. “He was obeyed,” writes Conrad of the company manager in *Heart of Darkness*, “yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect” (49).

**ex.5:** The phrase is inserted as an appositive statement and is surrounded by commas. The verb used is in the present tense—even though Conrad died in 1924—to give the phrase more impact and currency.

**D) Use a formal introductory phrase** that typically uses the terms “the *following...*”  
use a **colon** before the quotation  
use quotation marks.

6. The three witches’ eerie incantation introduces thematic material that shapes all events throughout the play:  
“Fair is foul, and foul is fair / Hover through the fog and filthy air” (*Mac.* 1.1.12).
7. The following demonstrates Wilde’s ability to deride all socio-economic groups with one sarcastic quip:  
“Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them?” (*Importance 2*).

**ex.6:** The quotation completes the concept introduced in the opening clause. Note use of back slash [ / ] to indicate line breaks in quotations from poetry or plays under four lines in length.

**ex. 7:** The quotation ends with a question mark, so maintain this within the closing quotation marks and add the parenthetical reference after followed by a period.

## Quotations over 4 lines long

- indent all quoted material, all quoted material, usually by one tab (or five spaces)
- do not use quotation marks
- quotation is double spaced
- use colon before inserting quotation
- try to preserve original format when quoting from poetry or plays (see ex. 9)

8. In *What is Abstraction?*, Benjamin interprets non-figurative painting:

Abstraction is the negation of representation. It is the form taken by painting once the concern of painting is self-definition. [...] . The force of this description of modernist painting as in ‘its latest phase’ only reinforces this point. Abstraction arises once the field of representation no longer pertains. (21)

9. Keeshing-Tobias describes her sense of cultural alienation in “Trickster Beyond 1992”:

sometimes  
i go  
about pitying  
myself while I am  
blown by the  
across the  
sky (105)

**ex 8, 9:** Parenthetical reference follows the period; in poetry punctuation can be irregular, if no period ends the sentence, then do not include this in an indented quotation (see ex. 9)

## Ellipsis: Omitting Words or Sentences in a quotation

- To indicate an omitted word, phrase or sentence: insert ellipsis (three periods)
- surround ellipsis with square brackets
- leave a space before and after bracketed ellipsis
- use at the end of a quotation if omitting the final part of a sentence
- use period at the end of ellipsis if an entire sentence is omitted (see ex. 7)

11. Fuentes theorizes, in reference to the Spanish colonization of the New World, that “it was to these lands that the Europeans transferred their failed dreams [...]” (195).

10. Fuentes comments, “During the Renaissance, the discovery of America meant [...] that Europe had found a place for Utopia” (195).

**ex. 10:** Original quotation: “During the Renaissance, the discovery of America meant that, as we have seen, Europe had found a place for Utopia” (195). Note the parenthetical reference and the punctuation used.

**ex. 11:** Original quotation: “It was to these lands that the Europeans transferred their failed dreams, moving from paradise to despair” (195).

# Works Cited

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