

Quotation Marks

These are used to indicate special material or direct quotation. They can be double (“ . . . ”) or single (‘ . . . ’) depending on the style.

Note *

American English uses double quotes for direct quotations and single quotes for quotations within another quotation.

British English uses single quotes for direct quotations and double quotes for quotations within another quotation.

- **Use quotation marks to set off a word-for-word quotation.**

1a. Always capitalize the first word in a complete quotation.

Examples

1. Ena said, “Robots are taking over the workforce, and human labor will be obsolete.”
2. “What danger?” she asked.
3. He flashed a grin and said, “Have we met before?”
4. “You may need to call a technician. Just call the admin and she’ll take care of it,” he advised.

1b. Except when the quotation continues a sentence.

Examples:

1. Ena said that robots were “taking over the workforce” and that “human labor will be obsolete.”
2. His speech inspired me to “live life fully” and to “never give up on my dreams.”
3. No one has ever told me that “I make people happy with just a smile.”
4. He advised that you may need to “call a technician.”

- **Use commas with a direct quotation; except with one-word quotations after he said, she wrote, etc.**

Examples:

1. “This place is amazing,” she exclaimed.
2. “Where,” Ken asked, “did you find the treasure map?”
3. He said “Go.”
4. “Go,” he said.

- **Quotations functioning as subjects or objects might not need a comma.**

Examples:

1. I shouldn’t have said “I’m sorry.”
2. He said “Go.”
3. The idiom “blessing in disguise” means that something good isn’t recognized at

first.

- **Periods and commas ALWAYS go inside quotation marks (US English).**

Examples:

1. Marilyn wrote: "I like you."
2. The movie we saw was "Bohemian Rhapsody."
3. "Go," he said.
4. "Where," Ken asked, "did you find the treasure map?"

In UK English if they are not part of the actual quotation they go outside the quotes

No one heard when he said "I need help". - British

No one heard when he said "I need help." - American

"Hello", he said. "How are you today?" - British

"Hello," he said. "How are you today?" - American

- **Both US and UK English adopt the same style for question and exclamation marks.**

Examples:

1. Marilyn wrote: "Do you like me?"
2. Have you seen "Bohemian Rhapsody"?
3. Can you believe it? He has never heard of "Queen"!
4. How dare he call me "Monster Princess"!

Use quotation marks for the titles of

- Poems
- Stories
- Essays
- Songs
- Chapter titles
- Magazine or newspaper articles
- Individual episodes of a television series
- Page of a Web site

Use italic or underlining for the titles of

- Collections of poetry, stories, or essays
- Titles of books
- Titles of CDs or tapes or records (Do they still make records?)
- Magazines or newspapers

- Television and radio shows
 - Plays
 - The title of the entire Web site
- **Use single quotation for quotations within quotations in American English (opposite for British English)**

Examples:

1. “I don’t like people who casually say ‘I love you’ without sincerity, said Mike. Marian replied, “I entered a building which had a poster that read ‘enter at your own risk.’”
2. Dani told me, “Hannah said, ‘This will never work.’”
3. He asked, “Did Hannah really say, ‘It’s not allowed to sleep in the office’?”
4. “I read the poem ‘Frozen in Bliss’ yesterday,” Daphne said.

Others uses

Writing about letters and words Quotation marks can be used when referring to a specific word or letter.

Example

In the previous sentence, “apple” was properly spelled with two “p”s.

Translations As an alternative to parentheses, quotation marks can be used to enclose a translation. In this case, it is necessary to set the translation off with commas.

Example

His knowledge of Spanish is limited to gracias, “thank you,” and adios, “goodbye.”

Scare quotes (also known as sneer quotes) are used to cast doubt on a word or phrase, or to emphasize that the word or phrase is being used as a euphemism.

Examples

He often spoke of his “job” that he does at home. This job was folding letters for his mom.

Nicknames When inserted in the middle of a person’s actual name, a nickname should appear in quotation marks.

Example

Jerry “The Bear” Smith

EXERCISES

1. Use quotation marks to set off a word-for-word quotation.

1a. Always capitalize the first word in a complete quotation.

1b. Except when the quotation continues a sentence.

Put quotation marks in the sentences and capitalize as needed.

1. Are we leaving soon she asked.

2. The doctor told us that an excessive diet is unhealthy.

3. We really shouldn't have done that he said.

4. Excuse me she said do you have the time?

5. The team captain yelled we must win this game!

6. He took her hands in his and asked will you marry me?

2. Periods and Commas.

2a. Use commas with direct quotation; except with one-word quotations after he said, she wrote, etc.

2b. Quotations functioning as subjects or objects might not need a comma.

2c. Periods and commas ALWAYS go inside quotation marks (US English).

Does the sentence use correct punctuation (use American rules)? Write YES or NO on the space before the number.

_____ 1. "The pandas are so adorable" she said.

_____ 2. The policeman said, "Stop."

_____ 3. "The Creation of Adam," by Michelangelo, is found in the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City.

_____ 4. "It's a good opportunity," he said, "to start the business together."

_____ 5. Never give up on your dreams the teacher remarked.

_____ 6. "Impressive," she commended her students.

_____ 7. I am excited to see the new "Lion King" movie next month.

_____ 8. Harry took a deep breath and said "I will defeat you whatever it takes".

_____ 9. Scared and anxious, Cathy dialed the phone. A voice on the other line responded Surprise!

_____ 10. You only live once is a very popular quote among young people.

_____ 11. We must help her. No matter what happens, a "Friend in need is a friend

indeed".

_____ 12. The girl told me that she was a fan of our team.

3. Both US and UK English adopt the same style for question and exclamation marks.

Put question and exclamation marks appropriately.

1. "What have you done he yelled.
2. Alice asked me, Who gave you that funny name
3. He laughed hard, No wonder you're broke
4. How wonderful she sarcastically exclaimed.
5. Neither of us said anything when a loud BANG made us jump in shock.
6. Who told you Kate asked Mira.

4. Used for titles and names of materials, and technical terms.

Which word or words should be put in quotation marks?

- _____ 1. Shall we print a copy of the article Learning Blocks for the meeting?
 a. a copy b. the article c. Learning Blocks
- _____ 2. Take Me to Church, by Hozier is in one of my Youtube playlist.
 a. Take Me to Church b. Hozier c. Youtube playlist

5. Use single quotation for quotations within quotations. (American version)

Identify the quotations within the following quotations. Rewrite the sentences and put either single or double quotation marks to make the meaning clear.

1. Grace's mother told us, My grandmother's advice was Always be kind and I try to do that.

2. I'll read the first graders my poem Waterfall after school, Mrs. Simpson said.

3. My favorite fairy tale is Beauty and The Beast, said Jeff.

4. The team captain remarked, Keep on yelling Hooray!

5. We went to Karaoke last night and we sang the song A Whole New World.

6. Let's discuss the meaning of the Chinese proverb The journey of a thousand miles begin with a single step, said the professor.

ANSWER KEY

1. Use quotation marks to set off a word-for-word quotation.

1a. Always capitalize the first word in a complete quotation.

1b. Except when the quotation continues a sentence.

Put quotation marks in the sentences and capitalize as needed.

Answers:

1. "Are we leaving soon?" she asked.
2. The doctor told us that "an excessive diet is unhealthy."
3. "We really shouldn't have done that," he said.
4. "Excuse me," she said, "do you have the time?"
5. The team captain yelled, "We must win this game!"
6. He took her hands in his and asked, "Will you marry me?"

2. Periods and Commas.

2a. Use commas with direct quotation; except with one-word quotations after he said, she wrote, etc.

2b. Quotations functioning as subjects or objects might not need a comma.

2c. Periods and commas ALWAYS go inside quotation marks (US English).

Does the sentence use correct punctuation (use American rules)? Write YES or NO on the space before the number.

Answers:

1. NO - "The pandas are so adorable," she said.
2. YES
3. YES

4. YES
5. NO - "Never give up on your dreams," the teacher remarked.
6. YES
7. YES
8. NO - Harry took a deep breath and said, "I will defeat you whatever it takes."
9. NO - Scared and anxious, Cathy dialed the phone. A voice on the other line responded, "Surprise!"

3. Both US and UK English adopt the same style for question and exclamation marks.

Put question and exclamation marks appropriately.

Answers:

1. "What have you done?" he yelled.
2. Alice asked me, "Who gave you that funny name?"
3. He laughed hard, "No wonder you're broke!"
4. "How wonderful!" she sarcastically exclaimed.
5. Neither of us said anything when a loud "BANG!" made us jump in shock.
6. "Who told you?" Kate asked Mira.

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Answers:

1. Shall we print a copy of the article Learning Blocks for the meeting?
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3. "My favorite fairy tale is 'Beauty and The Beast,'" said Jeff.
4. The team captain remarked, "Keep on yelling, 'Hooray!'"
5. We went to Karaoke last night and we sang the song "A Whole New World."

