

Writing: A Reference Guide/A Guide to Reference
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One of the most difficult aspects of writings is that which concerns quotation, reference and acknowledgement. Every essay is made up, like a patchwork, of other people's words and other people's work. However, if we conceal or fail to mention our debts we are likely to be caught in the act of plagiarism. If we summarize or paraphrase the work of another, we should acknowledge this in a footnote.¹ If we cite another text directly we must make reference to our source:

Given written or verbal outlines of a plot, he was useless; but, with a half-dozen pictures round which to write his tale, he could astonish.²

When a quotation is of a certain length - more than two lines - it should be 'blocked' as in the above example. A shorter quotation can be included in the text: 'Let the house reveal its own secrets.'³ It will be noticed that a single quotation-mark is used, and that all quotation-marks will correctly envelop and 'embrace' their words; they should not be seen to 'turn away in disdain.'⁴

Matters become more complicated when the passage one is quoting is itself a quotation or, in fiction, a passage of direct speech. Then, regardless of the text you are citing, you must use double quotation-marks, "thus".⁵ The outer ring of quotation marks is single, the next one in is double, the next is single, and so *ad infinitum*.⁵ Marlow may say: 'I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally,' and in every edition of *Heart of Darkness* his words will be contained within single quotation-marks. But when we cite that passage we must put Marlow's speech - together with the phrase indicating the speaker - within our own quotation: "I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally," he began....⁶ However, when set as a block-quotation, the passage will be exactly as printed in the novel:

¹ Not to do so is a very serious offence; see A.N. Same, *In Others' Words: A Sociological and Juridical Account of the Causes and Consequences of Plagiarism* (New York: Court House, 1995).

² Rudyard Kipling, 'Dayspring Mishandled,' in *Limits and Renewals* [1932] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 29.

³ Wilkie Collins, *No Name* [1862] (Oxford: World's Classics, 1998), p. 7.

⁴ A word-processor will turn the quotation marks away if you (wrongly) introduce a space between the ' mark ' and the first letter. Quotation marks and parenthetical marks (known as lunulae) like to be intimate with their words.

⁵ Note that in English there is a convention whereby one underlines foreign words and phrases, but not the abbreviation of those phrases: '*id est*,' but 'i.e.'; *exempla gratia* but e.g.; '*et cetera*' but 'etc.' Do not even think of converting Danish abbreviations into English: 'bl.a.' may mean but cannot be 'a.o.'; nor can 'm.v.h.' be translated as 'w.b.w.'. Only to a Danish reader might 'b.t.w.' be understood as 'by the way'. Abbreviations in English are usually of Latin, seldom of English, phrases.

⁶ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* [1902] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 10.

‘I don’t want to bother you much with what happened to me personally,’ he began....

We must follow the text exactly in the matter and order of words and punctuation, but we must adjust the quotation marks according to the new context that we have provided.

A particular difficulty with quotations concerns the ways in which they can be integrated into our own essays. There are two ways: syntactical and punctuational. The latter is easy: ‘The judge he felt kind of sore.’⁷ (A comma may also serve, instead of the colon, when one’s own sentence is to continue after the quotation.)⁸ Syntax like Huck’s can be attached to your own only (we may hope) to your disadvantage. However, those who write proper English can enhance one’s own prose, as one’s own words become or mingle with another’s. Thus I too can say, with Kent, that

If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness.⁹

The problem with such syntactic integration is that one often has to adjust the persons and the tenses. Kent says: ‘I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.’ (*King Lear*, I, i, 1) but if we want to integrate that in our own sentence, whose subject is Kent, we might write as follows: Kent thinks that ‘the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.’ Gloucester responds that ‘It did always seem so to [him].’ The use of square brackets within quotations, to indicate an adjustment of person or tense, is, though seldom elegant, sometimes necessary. Note that quotations from plays, when set as block-quotations, never use quotation marks. The words in a play are given in dialogue, not in direct speech; only the latter uses quotation marks.

⁷ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* [1884] (Harmondsworth: Penguin: 1966), p. 73.

⁸ See the quotation below: ‘I am not in favour of a neo-Nazi revival.’ Note that the superscript numeral goes outside the parenthetical mark only when the note refers to everything contained within the parenthesis.

⁹ Shakespeare, *King Lear*, I, iv, lines 1-4. Should the essay be devoted to Shakespeare, it would be necessary to specify the edition used. But for a casual quotation such as the above, to Shakespeare, the Bible, *Paradise Lost* and other texts (usually poetry and drama) which exist in many editions, and in which identification can be made by intrinsic means, a simple reference will suffice. ‘Intrinsic means’ of identification are those such as act and scene numbers, book or line numbers, or chapter numbers: signs of locations which remain constant in every edition. ‘Extrinsic means’ of identification are those which are dependent on a particular edition, and are in practical terms useless with any other edition of the same text. The commonest form of extrinsic identification is the page number; this is used only for novels and works of prose, and should never be used for poetry or drama. Never, therefore, locate a citation from *Hamlet* by *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, p. 876. Nor should any poem ever be referred to a page number, either in that poet’s collected works, or in the *Norton Anthology*. Title with line number is sufficient for any volume with an Index of Titles.

Within a quotation it may be thought desirable to omit a few words, a phrase, even a whole clause. This is done by ... inserting three points, with a space before and after. If what is omitted concludes the quoted sentence, one uses, after a space, four points, and there, on the fourth, your sentence ends, together with the one quoted.... This device, known as ellipsis, can be used unethically. If your source has written, 'I am not in favour of a neo-Nazi revival,' it is not ethical to quote this in the form: 'I am ... in favour of a neo-Nazi revival.' One can see how easily the reader might suppose the ellipsis to cover a mere modifying phrase: 'I am, after careful reflection....' Another example: 'There is no God....' is not a fair quotation of the Islamic prayer 'There is no God but God.'

A new paragraph begins like this, with a full indentation. A line-space indicates a new section. A block-quotation in prose takes one full indentation as its left-hand margin: see the quotations keyed to notes 2 and 6 above. The block-quotation from a play can be positioned with two full indentations as its left-hand margin, leaving room, in the interval between first and second indentations, to insert, when necessary, the speaker's name. Block-quotations from poetry can be formatted with two full indentations, for visual reasons:

Swift has sailed into his rest;
Savage indignation there
Cannot lacerate his breast.
Imitate him if you dare,
World-besotted traveler; he
Served human liberty.¹⁰

Poetry has its own laws and sets its own margins; it ought to be visible as poetry on the page. However, it should never be centred on the page: the left-hand margin, however irregular, is an essential part of a poem. Prose runs on and on, in block-quotations returning to the left only as far as the full indentation.

When citing a poem or an essay from a volume, it should be noted that the title of a part of a book - a text that forms less than an entire volume - is put in quotation marks, and that the title of an entire volume is italicised:

Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?¹¹

(Please observe that this indentation, following a quotation, is not an error, but indicates that a new paragraph has begun. To prevent misunderstanding, try to avoid ending a paragraph with a quotation.) Note that what is inside a text,

¹⁰ W.B. Yeats, 'Swift's Epitaph,' in *A New Anthology of Modern Poetry*, edited with an introduction by Selden Rodman (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 129. The danger of citing a text from an anthology is that it will seldom be accurate; here 'traveler' is spelt as they spell it in New York, not as in Dublin or London.

¹¹ T.S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,' in *Prufrock and Other Observations* (London: Faber, 1917). If one must cite from texts included in, let us not blush to write it, the *Norton Anthology*, the title of every text - even of one that would 'normally' constitute an independent volume - is reduced to confinement within single quotation marks, while the *Norton Anthology* alone is dignified by italics.

however ancient, remains in an eternal present, and that it is correct to write that Shakespeare *wrote King Lear* during the reign of James I, and that in *King Lear* he *writes* about heaths, cliffs and difficult children.¹² When the first line serves as the title, as with Shakespeare's sonnets, one may write either that 'Shakespeare wrote "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"' and that Shakespeare writes "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" This does not mean that either is acceptable, but that the tense alone will tell the reader whether one is writing about the sonnet as a historical item or about the text of the sonnet.

Do not refer to authors by any title: neither 'Miss Austen' nor 'Mr. Hemingway'. ('Dr. Johnson' is still a tolerated exception, though increasingly quaint.) And remember that English is much more generous than Danish in its use of upper-case initials, for proper names and even their adjectival forms, months, days of the week and so forth. (Try to avoid 'etc.' in essays.)

Not all teachers will agree in detail about the examples furnished within this sample. The main rule is that, whatever guidelines or principles one follows, one should follow them consistently.

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OR:

Whitehead, F., 'Lancelot's Penance,' in J.A.W. Bennett, ed., *Essays on Malory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 104-13.

If the latter form of citation is used for Whitehead, there is no need to give a separate entry for Bennett. Where only one essay or item has been taken from one volume, the latter alternative is usually convenient. Where two or more items

¹² Note the use of italics for emphasis, a device to which one should resort only sparingly. The proximity of the italicised title *King Lear* should indicate the visual disadvantages.

are taken from the same volume, the former mode of citation saves much space and is always to be preferred.

When a volume has two or more authors or editors, there is no reason to invert the order of first and last names for any but the first-named. Only the first-named will figure in an alphabetical sequence; those whose names are not alphabetically significant should be listed with first name first, last name last. If (see 'The Waste Land' above) one were to give a separate bibliographical entry to the *Norton Anthology*, it would be placed in alphabetical sequence according to the first-named editor. M.H. Abrams would then be listed as Abrams, M.H., but S. Greenblatt would be unchanged. As with 'Millet, Bella and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, eds,' above. The previous sentence has no main verb, and is known as a fragment; fragments should be deployed sparingly.

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