

The Apostrophe, Quotation Marks, and Italics/Underlining

All information from <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/italics.htm> and

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/index.html>

1. The Apostrophe--Brought to you by the Purdue University Online Writing Lab

The apostrophe has three uses:

- 1) to form possessives of nouns
- 2) to show the omission of letters
- 3) to indicate certain plurals of lowercase letters.

Apostrophes are NOT used for possessive pronouns or for noun plurals, including acronyms.

Forming possessives of nouns

To see if you need to make a possessive, turn the phrase around and make it an "of the..." phrase. For example:

the boy's hat = the hat of the boy

three days' journey = journey of three days

Once you've determined whether you need to make a possessive, follow these rules to create one.

- add 's to the singular form of the word (even if it ends in -s):
the owner's car

James's hat

- add 's to the plural forms that do not end in -s:

the children's game

the geese's honking

- add ' to the end of plural nouns that end in -s:

houses' roofs

three friends' letters

- add 's to the end of compound words:

my brother-in-law's money

- add 's to the last noun to show joint possession of an object:

Todd and Anne's apartment

Showing omission of letters

Apostrophes are used in contractions. A contraction is a word (or set of numbers) in which one or more letters (or numbers) have been omitted. The apostrophe shows this omission. Contractions are common in speaking and in informal writing. To use an apostrophe to create a contraction, place an apostrophe where the omitted letter(s) would go. Here are some examples:

don't = do not

I'm = I am

he'll = he will

who's = who is

Forming plurals of lowercase letters

Apostrophes are used to form plurals of letters that appear in lowercase; here the rule appears to be more typographical than grammatical, e.g. "three ps" versus "three p's." To form the plural of a lowercase letter, place 's after the letter. There is no need for apostrophes indicating a plural on capitalized letters, numbers, and symbols (though keep in mind that some editors, teachers, and professors still prefer them). Here are some examples:

p's and q's = a phrase indicating politeness, possibly from "mind your pleases and thankyou's"?

Nita's mother constantly stressed minding one's p's and q's.

three Macintosh G4s = three of the Macintosh model G4

There are two G4s currently used in the writing classroom.

many &s = many ampersands

That printed page has too many &s on it.

the 1960s = the years in decade from 1960 to 1969

The 1960s were a time of great social unrest.

Don't use apostrophes for possessive pronouns or for noun plurals.

Apostrophes should not be used with possessive pronouns because possessive pronouns already show possession -- they don't need an apostrophe. *His, her, its,*

(Note: Its and it's are not the same thing. It's is a contraction for "it is" and its is a possessive pronoun meaning "belonging to it." It's raining out= it is raining out. A simple way to remember this rule is the fact that you don't use an apostrophe for the possessives his or hers, so don't do it with its!)

Quotation Marks

Quotation Marks with Direct and Indirect Quotations

Quoting Prose

Direct quotations are another person's exact words--either spoken or in print--incorporated into your own writing.

- Use a set of quotation marks to enclose each direct quotation included in your writing.
- Use a capital letter with the first word of a direct quotation of a whole sentence. Do not use a capital letter with the first word of a direct quotation of part of a sentence.
- If the quotation is interrupted and then continues in your sentence, do not capitalize the second part of the quotation.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen, owners of a 300-acre farm, said, "We refuse to use that pesticide because it might pollute the nearby wells."

Mr. and Mrs. Allen stated that they "refuse to use that pesticide" because of possible water pollution.

"He likes to talk about football," she said, "especially when the Super Bowl is coming up."

Indirect quotations are not exact words but rather rephrasing or summaries of another person's words. Do not use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

According to their statement to the local papers, the Allen's refuse to use pesticide because of potential water pollution.

Below are some further explanations and examples of how to integrate quoted prose into your own writing.

Quotation within a quotation

Use single quotation marks for a quotation enclosed inside another quotation. For example:

The agricultural reporter for the newspaper explained, "When I talked to the Allens last week, they said, 'We refuse to use that pesticide.' "

Omitted words in a quotation

If you leave words out of a quotation, use an ellipsis mark to indicate the omitted words. If you need to insert something within a quotation, use a pair of brackets to enclose the addition. For example:

<i>full quotation</i>	The welfare agency representative said, "We are unable to help every family that we'd like to help because we don't have the funds to do so."
<i>omitted material with ellipsis</i>	The welfare agency representative said, "We are unable to help every family . . . because we don't have the funds to do so."
<i>added material with brackets</i>	The welfare agency representative explained that they are "unable to help every family that [they would] like to help."

Block quotations

A quotation that extends more than four typed lines on a page should be indented one inch from the left margin (the equivalent of two half-inch paragraph indentations). Maintain double spacing as in the main text, and do not use quotation marks for the block quotation.

Quoting Poetry

Short quotations

When you quote a single line of poetry, write it like any other short quotation. Two lines can be run into your text with a slash mark to indicate the end of the first line. Use quotation marks.

In his poem "Mending Wall," Robert Frost writes: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall, / That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it."

Long quotations

If the quotation is three lines or longer, set it off like a block quotation (see above). Some writers prefer to set off two-line verse quotations also, for emphasis. Quote the poem line by line as it appears on the original page, and do not use quotation marks. Indent one inch from the left margin.

In his poem "Mending Wall," Robert Frost questions the building of barriers and walls:

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.

Writing Dialogue

Write each person's spoken words, however brief, as a separate paragraph. Use commas to set off dialogue tags such as "she said" or "he explained." Closely related narrative prose can be included in a paragraph with dialogue. If one person's speech goes on for more than one paragraph, use quotation marks to open the speech and at the beginning--but not the end--of each new paragraph in the speech. To close the speech, use quotation marks at the end of the final paragraph.

Quotation Marks for Titles of Minor Works and Parts of Wholes

Use quotation marks for:

- titles of short or minor works, such as songs, short stories, essays, short poems, one-act plays, and other literary works that are shorter than a three-act play or a complete book.
- titles of parts of larger works, such as chapters in books; articles in newspapers, magazines, journals, or other periodical publications; and episodes of television and radio series.

Use underlining or italics for titles of major works or of works that contain smaller segments such as books; plays of three or more acts; newspapers, magazines, journals, or other periodical publications; films; and television and radio series.

Do not use quotation marks for referring to the Bible or other sacred texts or to legal documents.

Quotation Marks for Words

Use quotation marks to indicate words used ironically, with reservations, or in some unusual way.

The great march of "progress" has left millions impoverished and hungry.

For words used as words themselves or for technical or unfamiliar terms used for the first time (and defined), use italics.

The English word *nuance* comes from a Middle French word meaning "shades of color."

The use of *chiasmus*, or the inversion of syntactic elements in parallel phrases, can create rhetorically powerful expressions.

Punctuation with Quotation Marks

Use a comma to introduce a quotation after a standard dialogue tag, a brief introductory phrase, or a dependent clause, for example, "He asked," "She stated," "According to Bronson," or "As Shakespeare wrote." Use a colon to introduce a quotation after an independent clause.

As D. H. Nachas explains, "The gestures used for greeting others differ greatly from one culture to another."

D. H. Nachas explains cultural differences in greeting customs: "Touching is not a universal sign of greeting. While members of European cultures meet and shake hands as a gesture of greeting, members of Asian cultures bow to indicate respect."

Put commas and periods within closing quotation marks, except when a parenthetical reference follows the quotation.

He said, "I may forget your name, but I never remember a face."

History is stained with blood spilled in the name of "civilization."

Mullen, criticizing the apparent inaction, writes, "Donahue's policy was to do nothing" (27).

Put colons and semicolons outside closing quotation marks.

Williams described the experiment as "a definitive step forward"; other scientists disagreed.

Benedetto emphasizes three elements of what she calls her "Olympic journey": family support, personal commitment, and great coaching.

Put a dash, question mark, or exclamation point within closing quotation marks when the punctuation applies to the quotation itself and outside when it applies to the whole sentence.

Philip asked, "Do you need this book?"

Does Dr. Lim always say to her students, "You must work harder"?

Sharon shouted enthusiastically, "We won! We won!"

I can't believe you actually like that song, "If You Wanna Be My Lover"!

Unnecessary Quotation Marks

- Do not put quotation marks around the titles of your essays.
- Do not use quotation marks for common nicknames, bits of humor, technical terms that readers are likely to know, and trite or well-known expressions.

3. Underlining/Italics vs. Quotation Marks

Titles

Generally, we italicize the titles of things that can stand by themselves. Thus we differentiate between the titles of novels and journals, say, and the titles of poems, short stories, articles, and episodes (for television shows). The titles of these shorter pieces would be surrounded with double quotation marks.

In writing the titles of newspapers, do not italicize the word *the*, even when it is part of the title (the *New York Times*), and do not italicize the name of the city in which the newspaper is published unless that name is part of the title: the *Hartford Courant*, but the London *Times*.

Other titles that we would italicize include the following:

- Journals and Magazines: *Time*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Crazyhorse*, *Georgia Review*
- Plays: *Waiting for Godot*, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*
- Long Musical Pieces: Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* (but "Waltz of the Flowers"), Schubert's *Winterreise* (but "Ave Maria"). For musical pieces named by type, number and key — Mozart's Divertimento in D major, Barber's Cello Sonata Op. 6 — we use neither italics nor quotation marks.
- Cinema: *Slingblade*, *Shine*, *The Invisible Man*
- Television and Radio Programs: *Dateline*, *Seinfeld*, *Fresh Air*, *Car Talk*
- Artworks: the *Venus de Milo*, Whistler's *The Artist's Mother*
- Famous Speeches: Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, Washington's *Second Inaugural Address* (when that is the actual title of the speech)
- Long Poems (that are extensive enough to appear in a book by themselves): Longfellow's *Evangeline*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*
- Pamphlets: *New Developments in AIDS Research*

We do not italicize the titles of long sacred works: the Bible, the Koran. Nor do we italicize the titles of books of the Bible: Genesis, Revelation, 1 Corinthians.

When an exclamation mark or question mark is part of a title, make sure that that mark is italicized along with the title,

- My favorite book is *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?*
- I love Dr. Suess's *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*

(Do not add an additional period to end such sentences.) If the end mark is not part of the title, but is added to indicate a question or exclamation, do not italicize that mark.

- Did you enjoy Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain?*

Names of Vehicles

- *Challenger*
- *Titanic*
- *Orient Express*
- U.S.S. *Eisenhower* (Don't italicize the U.S.S.)
- H.M.S. *Pinafore* (Don't italicize the H.M.S. when you're talking about the ship. If you're talking about the light opera, then it's part of the title, *H.M.S. Pinafore*.)

We don't italicize names of vehicles that are brand names: Ford Explorer, Corvette, Nissan Pathfinder, Boeing 747.

Foreign Words or Phrases

- If a word or phrase has become so widely used and understood that it has become part of the English language — such as the French "bon voyage" or the abbreviation for the latin *et cetera*, "etc." — we would not italicize it. Often this becomes a matter of private judgment and context. For instance, whether you italicize the Italian *sotto voce* depends largely on your audience and your subject matter.

Words as Words

Examples:

- The word *basically* is often unnecessary and should be removed.
- There were four *and's* and one *therefore* in that last sentence. (Notice that the apostrophe-s, used to create the plural of the word-as-word *and*, is not italicized.
- She defines *ambiguity* in a positive way, as the ability of a word to mean more than one thing at the same time.

For Emphasis

Note: It is important not to overdo the use of italics to emphasize words. After a while, it loses its effect and the language starts to sound like something out of a comic book.

- I really don't care what *you* think! (Notice that just about any word in that sentence could have been italicized, depending on how the person said the sentence.)
- These rules do *not* apply to newspaper writing.