

27i When are quotation marks wrong?

Never enclose a word in quotation marks to call attention to it, to intensify it, or to be sarcastic.

NO I'm "very" happy about the news.

YES I'm very happy about the news.

Never enclose the title of your paper in quotation marks (or underline it). However, if the title of your paper contains another title that requires quotation marks, use those marks only for the included title.

NO "The Elderly in Nursing Homes: A Case Study"

YES The Elderly in Nursing Homes: A Case Study

NO Character Development in Shirley Jackson's Story "The Lottery"

YES Character Development in Shirley Jackson's Story

"The Lottery"

EXERCISE 27-4 Correct any errors in the use of quotation marks and other punctuation with quotation marks. If you think a sentence is correct, explain why. For help, consult 27e through 27i.

1. Dying in a shabby hotel room, the witty writer Oscar Wilde supposedly said, "Either that wallpaper goes, or I do".
2. Was it the Russian novelist Tolstoy who wrote, "All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way?"
3. In his poem A Supermarket in California, Allen Ginsberg addresses the dead poet Walt Whitman, asking, Where are we going, Walt Whitman? The doors close / in an hour. Which way does your beard point tonight?
4. Toni Morrison made this reply to the claim that "art that has a political message cannot be good art:" She said that "the best art is political" and that her aim was to create art that was "unquestionably political" and beautiful at the same time.
5. Benjamin Franklin's strange question—"What is the use of a newborn child?—" was his response to someone who doubted the usefulness of new inventions.

CHAPTER 28

Other Punctuation Marks

This chapter explains the uses of the **dash**, **parentheses**, **brackets**, **ellipsis points**, the **slash**, and the **hyphen**. These punctuation marks aren't used often, but each serves a purpose and gives you options with your writing style.

DASH

28a When can I use a dash in my writing?

The **dash**, or a pair of dashes, lets you interrupt a sentence to add information. Such interruptions can fall in the middle or at the end of a sentence. To make a dash, hit the hyphen key twice (--). Do not put a space before, between, or after the hyphens. Some word processing programs automatically convert two hyphens into a dash; either form is correct. In print, the dash appears as an unbroken line approximately the length of two hyphens joined together (—). If you handwrite, make the dash at least twice as long as a hyphen.

Using dashes for special emphasis

If you want to emphasize an example, a definition, an **APPOSITIVE**, or a contrast, you can use a dash or dashes. Some call a dash “a pregnant pause”—that is, take note, something special is coming. Use dashes sparingly so that you don’t dilute their impact.

EXAMPLE

The care-takers—those who are helpers, nurturers, teachers, mothers—are still systematically devalued.

—Ellen Goodman, “Just Woman’s Work?”

DEFINITION

Although the emphasis at the school was mainly language-speaking, reading, writing—the lessons always began with an exercise in politeness.

—Elizabeth Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*

APPOSITIVE

Two of the strongest animals in the jungle are vegetarians—the elephant and the gorilla.

—Dick Gregory, *The Shadow That Scares Me*

CONTRAST

Fire cooks food—and burns down forests.

—Smokey the Bear

Place what you emphasize with dashes next to or nearby the material it refers to so that what you want to accomplish with your emphasis is not lost.

- NO** The current **argument is**—one that faculty, students, and coaches debate fiercely—whether to hold athletes to the same academic standards as others face.


YES The current **argument**—one that faculty, students, and coaches debate fiercely—is whether to hold athletes to the same academic standards as others face.

Using dashes to emphasize an aside

An **aside** is a writer's comment, often the writer's personal views, on what's been written. Generally, this technique isn't appropriate for ACADEMIC WRITING, so before you insert an aside, carefully consider your writing PURPOSE and your AUDIENCE.

Television showed us the war. It showed us the war in a way that was—if you chose to watch television, at least—unavoidable.

—Nora Ephron, *Scribble Scribble*

 **ALERTS:** (1) If the words within a pair of dashes require a question mark or an exclamation point, place it before the second dash.

A first date—do you remember?—stays in the memory forever.

(2) Never use commas, semicolons, or periods next to dashes. If such a need arises, revise your writing.

(3) Never enclose quotation marks in dashes except when the meaning requires them. These two examples show that, when required, the dash stops before or after the quotation marks; the two punctuation marks do not overlap.

Many of George Orwell's essays—"A Hanging," for example—draw on his experiences as a civil servant.

"Shooting an Elephant"—another Orwell essay—appears in many anthologies. 

EXERCISE 28-1 Write a sentence about each topic, shown in italics. Use dashes to set off what is asked for, shown in roman, in each sentence. For help, consult 28a.

EXAMPLE *science*, a definition

Ecology—the study of the interactions among animals, plants, and the physical environment—is closely related to both biology and geology.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>movie</i> , a contrast | 6. <i>social science</i> , a contrast |
| 2. <i>singer</i> , an appositive | 7. <i>writing</i> , an example |
| 3. <i>hobby</i> , an example | 8. <i>teacher</i> , an appositive |
| 4. <i>a fact</i> , an aside | 9. <i>business</i> , a definition |
| 5. <i>career</i> , a definition | 10. <i>technology</i> , an aside |

PARENTHESES

28b When can I use parentheses in my writing?

Parentheses let you interrupt a sentence to add various kinds of information. Parentheses are like dashes (28a) in that they set off extra or interrupting words—but unlike dashes, which emphasize material, parentheses de-emphasize what they enclose. Use parentheses sparingly because overusing them can make your writing lurch, not flow.

Using parentheses to enclose interrupting words

EXPLANATION

After they've finished with the pantry, the medicine cabinet, and the attic, they will throw out the red geranium (too many leaves), sell the dog (too many fleas), and send the children off to boarding school (too many scuffmarks on the hardwood floors).

—Suzanne Britt, “Neat People vs. Sloppy People”

EXAMPLE

Though other cities (Dresden, for instance) had been utterly destroyed in World War II, never before had a single weapon been responsible for such destruction.

—Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen,
Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum

ASIDE

The older girls (non-graduates, of course) were assigned the task of making refreshments for the night's festivities.

—Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

The sheer decibel level of the noise around us is not enough to make us cranky, irritable, or aggressive. (It can, however, affect our mental and physical health, which is another matter.)

—Carol Tavis, *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion*

Using parentheses for listed items and alternative numbers

When you number listed items within a sentence, enclose the numbers (or letters) in parentheses. Never use closing parentheses to set off numbers in a displayed list; use periods.

Four items are on the agenda for tonight's meeting: (1) current treasury figures, (2) current membership figures, (3) the budget for renovations, and (4) the campaign for soliciting additional public contributions.

 **ALERTS:** For listed items that fall within a sentence, (1) use a colon before a list only if an INDEPENDENT CLAUSE comes before the list, and

(2) Use commas or semicolons to separate the items, but be consistent within a piece of writing. If, however, any item contains punctuation itself, use a semicolon to separate the items. 🌀

In legal writing and in some BUSINESS WRITING, you can use parentheses to enclose a numeral that repeats a spelled-out number.

The monthly rent is three hundred fifty dollars (\$350).

Your order of fifteen (15) gross was shipped today.

In ACADEMIC WRITING, especially in subjects in which the use of figures or measurements is frequent, enclose alternative or comparative forms of the same number in parentheses: 2 mi (3.2 km).

Using other punctuation with parentheses

When a complete sentence enclosed in parentheses stands alone, start it with a capital letter and end it with a period. When a sentence in parentheses falls within another sentence, never start with a capital or end with a period.

NO Looking for his car keys (He had left them at my sister's house.) wasted an entire hour.

YES Looking for his car keys (he had left them at my sister's house) wasted an entire hour.

YES Looking for his car keys wasted an entire hour. (He had left them at my sister's house.)

Never put a comma before an opening parenthesis. If the material before the parenthetical material requires a comma, place that comma after the closing parenthesis.

NO Although clearly different from my favorite film, (The Wizard of Oz) *Gone with the Wind* is also outstanding.

YES Although clearly different from my favorite film (The Wizard of Oz), *Gone with the Wind* is also outstanding.

You can use a question mark or an exclamation point within parentheses that occur in a sentence.

Looking for clues (what did we expect to find?) wasted four days.

Never use quotation marks around parentheses that come before or after any quoted words.

NO Alberta Hunter (“Down Hearted Blues”) is known for singing jazz.

YES Alberta Hunter (“Down Hearted Blues”) is known for singing jazz.

BRACKETS

28c When do I need to use brackets in my writing?

Brackets allow you to enclose words that you want to insert into quotations, but only in the specific cases discussed next.

Adjusting a quotation with brackets

When you use a quotation, you might need to change the form of a word (a verb's tense, for example), add a brief definition, or fit the quotation into the grammatical structure of your sentence. In such cases, enclose the material you have inserted into the quotation in brackets. (This example uses MLA STYLE FOR PARENTHETICAL REFERENCES; see 33b.)

ORIGINAL SOURCE

Current research shows that successful learning takes place in an active environment.

—Deborah Moore, “Facilities and Learning Styles,” p. 22

QUOTATION WITH BRACKETS

Deborah Moore supports a student-centered curriculum and agrees with “current research [which] shows that successful learning takes place in an active environment” (22).

Using brackets to point out an error in a source or to add information within parentheses

You may find an error in words you want to quote—a wrong date, a misspelled word, or an error of fact. Fix that mistake by putting your correction in brackets, without changing the words you want to quote. This tells your readers that the error was in the original work and not made by you.

Using [*sic*]

Insert *sic* (without italics), enclosed in brackets, in your MLA-style essays and research papers to show your readers that you've quoted an error accurately. *Sic* is a Latin word that means “so,” or “thus,” which says “It is so (or thus) in the original.”

USE FOR ERROR

A journalist wrote, “The judge accepted an [sic] plea of not guilty.

USE FOR MISSPELLING

The building inspector wrote about the consequence of doubling the apartment's floor space: “With that much extra room per person, the tennants [sic] would sublet.”

Using brackets within parentheses

Use brackets to insert information within parentheses.

That expression (**first used in *A Fable for Critics* [1848] by James R. Lowell**) was popularized in the early twentieth century by Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

ELLIPSIS POINTS

28d How do I use ellipsis points in my writing?

The word *ellipsis* means “omission.” **Ellipsis points** in writing are a series of three spaced dots (use the period key on the keyboard). You’re required to use ellipsis points to indicate you’ve intentionally omitted words—perhaps even a sentence or more—from the source you’re quoting. These rules apply to both prose and poetry.

The *MLA Handbook* no longer recommends that ellipsis points you have inserted be enclosed in brackets to make it clear to your reader that the omission is yours. See Chapter 33 for more information.

28d.1 Using ellipsis points with prose

ORIGINAL SOURCE

These two minds, the emotional and the rational, operate in tight harmony for the most part, intertwining their very different ways of knowing to guide us through the world. Ordinarily, there is a balance between emotional and rational minds, with emotion feeding into and informing the operations of the rational mind, and the rational mind refining and sometimes vetoing the inputs of the emotions. Still, the emotional and rational minds are semi-independent faculties, each, as we shall see, reflecting the operation of distinct, but interconnected, circuitry in the brain.

—Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, p. 9

QUOTATION OF SELECTED WORDS, NO ELLIPSIS NEEDED

Goleman explains that the “two minds, the emotional and the rational” usually provide “a balance” in our daily observations and decision making (9).

QUOTATION WITH ELLIPSIS MID-SENTENCE

Goleman emphasizes the connections between parts of the mind: “Still, the emotional and rational minds are semi-independent faculties, each . . . reflecting the operation of distinct, but interconnected, circuitry in the brain” (9).

QUOTATION WITH ELLIPSIS AND PARENTHETICAL REFERENCE

Goleman emphasizes that the “two minds, the emotional and the rational, operate in tight harmony for the most part . . .” (9). [Note: In MLA style, place a sentence-ending period after the parenthetical reference.]

QUOTATION WITH ELLIPSIS ENDING THE SENTENCE

On page 9, Goleman states: “These two minds, the emotional and the rational, operate in tight harmony for the most part . . .” [Note: In MLA style, when all needed documentation information is written into a sentence—that is, not placed in parentheses at the end of the sentence—there’s no space between the sentence-ending period and an ellipsis.]

QUOTATION WITH SENTENCE OMITTED

Goleman explains: “These two minds, the emotional and the rational, operate in tight harmony for the most part, intertwining their very different ways of knowing to guide us through the world . . . Still, the emotional and rational minds are semi-independent faculties” (9).

QUOTATION WITH WORDS OMITTED FROM THE MIDDLE OF ONE SENTENCE TO THE MIDDLE OF ANOTHER

Goleman states: “Ordinarily, there is a balance between emotional and rational minds . . . reflecting the operation of distinct, but interconnected, circuitry in the brain” (9).

QUOTATION WITH WORDS OMITTED FROM THE MIDDLE OF ONE SENTENCE TO A COMPLETE OTHER SENTENCE

Goleman explains: “Ordinarily, there is a balance between emotional and rational minds. . . Still, the emotional and rational minds are semi-independent faculties, each, as we shall see, reflecting the operation of distinct, but interconnected, circuitry in the brain” (9).

When you omit words from a quotation, you also omit punctuation related to those words, unless it’s needed for the sentence to be correct.

Goleman explains: “These two minds. . . operate in tight harmony” (9). [comma in original source omitted after *minds*]

Goleman explains that the emotional and rational minds work together, while “still, . . . each, as we shall see, [reflects] the operation of distinct, but interconnected, circuitry in the brain” (9). [comma kept after *still* because it’s an introductory word; form of *reflecting* changed for sense of sentence]

28d.2 Using ellipsis points with poetry

When you omit one or more words from a line of poetry, follow the rules stated above for prose. However, when you omit a full line or more from poetry, use a full line of spaced dots.

ORIGINAL SOURCE**Little Boy Blue**

Little boy blue, come blow your horn,
 The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn
 Where is the little boy who looks after the sheep?
 He's under the haystack, fast asleep.

QUOTATION WITH LINES OMITTED**Little Boy Blue**

Little boy blue, come blow your horn,

 Where is the little boy who looks after the sheep?
 He's under the haystack, fast asleep.

SLASH**28e When can I use a slash in my writing?**

The **slash** (/), also called a *virgule* or *solidus*, is a diagonal line that separates or joins words in special circumstances.

Using a slash to separate quoted lines of poetry

When you quote more than three lines of a poem, no slash is involved; you merely follow the rules in 28d. When you quote three lines or fewer, enclose them in quotation marks and run them into your sentence—and use a slash to divide one line from the next. Leave a space on each side of the slash.

One of my mottoes comes from the beginning of Anne Sexton's poem "Words": "Be careful of words, / even the miraculous ones."

Capitalize and punctuate each line of poetry as in the original—but even if the quoted line of poetry doesn't have a period, use one to end your sentence. If your quotation ends before the line of poetry ends, use ellipsis points (28d).

Using a slash for numerical fractions in manuscripts

To type numerical fractions, use a slash (with no space before or after the slash) to separate the numerator and denominator. In mixed numbers—that is, whole numbers with fractions—leave a space between the whole number and its fraction: 1 2/3, 3 7/8. Do not use a hyphen. (For information about using spelled-out and numerical forms of numbers, see 29o.)

Using a slash for *and/or*

When writing in the humanities, try not to use word combinations connected with a slash, such as *and/or*. In academic disciplines in which such combinations are acceptable, separate the words with a slash. Leave no space before or after the slash. In the humanities, listing both alternatives in normal sentence structure is usually better than separating choices with a slash.

NO The best quality of reproduction comes from 35 mm slides/direct-positive films.

YES The best quality of reproduction comes from 35 mm slides **or** direct-positive films.

EXERCISE 28-2 Supply needed dashes, parentheses, brackets, ellipsis points, and slashes. If a sentence is correct as written, circle its number. In some sentences, when you can use either dashes or parentheses, explain your choice. For help, consult all sections of this chapter.

1. In *The Color Purple* a successful movie as well as a novel, Alice Walker explores the relationships between women and men in traditional African-American culture.
2. W. C. Fields offered two pieces of advice on job hunting: 1 never show up for an interview in bare feet, and 2 don't read your prospective employer's mail while he is questioning you about your qualifications.
3. Christina Rossetti wonders if the end of a life also means the end of love in a poem that opens with these two lines: "When I am dead, my dearest, Sing no sad songs for me."
4. After the internationally famous racehorse Dan Patch died suddenly from a weak heart, his devoted owner, Will Savage, died of the same condition a mere 32 1/2 hours later.
5. In his famous letter from the Birmingham jail on April 16, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr wrote: "You the eight clergymen who had urged him not to hold a protest deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham."
6. The world's most expensive doll house sold for \$256,000 at a London auction contains sixteen rooms, a working chamber organ, and a silver clothes press but no toilet.
7. Patients who pretend to have ailments are known to doctors as "Munchausens" after Baron Karl Friedrich Hieronymus von Münchhausen he was a German army officer who had a reputation for wild and unbelievable tales.

HYPHEN

28f When do I need a hyphen in my writing?

A **hyphen** serves to divide words at the end of a line, to combine words into compounds, and to communicate numbers.

28g When do I use a hyphen at the end of a line?

Generally, try not to divide a word with a hyphen at the end of a line. It makes reading easier. In printed books, hyphens are acceptable because of the limits on line length. (Check your instructor's preference.) If you must divide a word, try hard not to divide the last word on the first line of a paper, the last word in a paragraph, or the last word on a page.

When you can't avoid using a hyphen at the end of a line, break the word only between syllables. If you aren't sure about the syllables in a word, consult a dictionary.

28h How do I use a hyphen with prefixes and suffixes?

Prefixes are syllables in front of a **root**—a word's core, which carries the origin or meaning. Prefixes modify meanings. **Suffixes** also have modifying power, but they follow roots. Some prefixes and suffixes are attached to root words with hyphens, but others are not. Box 28-1 shows you how to decide.

BOX 28-1 SUMMARY



Hyphens with prefixes and suffixes

- Use hyphens after the prefixes *all-*, *ex-*, *quasi-*, and *self-*.

YES all-inclusive self-reliant

- Never use a hyphen when *self* is a root word, not a prefix.

NO self-ishness self-less

YES selfishness selfless

- Use a hyphen to avoid a distracting string of letters.

NO antiintellectual belllike prooutsourcing

YES anti-intellectual bell-like pro-outsourcing

- Use a hyphen to add a prefix or suffix to a numeral or a word that starts with a capital letter.

NO post1950s proAmerican Rembrandtlike

YES post-1950 pro-American Rembrandt-like

- Use a hyphen before the suffix *-elect*.

NO presidentelect

YES president-elect

- Use a hyphen to prevent confusion in meaning or pronunciation.

YES re-dress (means *dress again*) redress (means *set right*)

YES un-ionize (means *remove the ions*) unionize (means *form a union*)

- Use a hyphen when two or more prefixes apply to one root word.

YES pre- and post-Renaissance

28i How do I use hyphens with compound words?

A **compound word** puts two or more words together to express one concept. Compound words come in three forms: an *open-compound word*, as in *night shift*, hyphenated words, as in *tractor-trailer*, and a *closed-compound word*, as in *handbook*. Box 28-2 lists basic guidelines for positioning hyphens in compound words.

EXERCISE 28-3 Provide the correct form of the words in parentheses, according to the rules in 28f through 28i. Explain your reasoning for each.

1. The tiger is (all powerful) _____ in the cat family.
2. (Comparison and contrast) _____ studies of tigers and lions show that the tiger is the (more agile) _____ and powerful.
3. The tiger's body is a (boldly striped) _____ yellow, with a white (under body) _____.
4. Villagers seek to protect their homes by destroying tigers with traps, (spring loaded) _____ guns, and (poisoned arrows) _____.
5. Many people who do not live near a zoo get to see tigers only in (animal shows) _____, although (pro animal) _____ activists try to prevent tigers from being used this way.

BOX 28-2 SUMMARY



Hyphens with compound words

- Divide a compound word already containing a hyphen only after that hyphen, if possible. Also, divide a closed-compound word only between the two complete words, if possible.

NO self-con-scious sis-ter-in-law mas-terpiece

YES self-conscious sister-in-law master-piece

- Use a hyphen between a prefix and an open-compound word.

NO antigun control [*gun control* is an open-compound word]

YES anti-gun control

- Use a hyphen for most compound words that precede a noun but not for most compound words that follow a noun.

YES well-researched report report is well researched

YES two-inch clearance clearance of two inches

- Use hyphens when a compound modifier includes a series.

YES two-, three-, or four-year program



Hyphens with compound words (*continued*)

- Never use a hyphen when a compound modifier starts with an *-ly* adverb.

NO	happily-married couple	loosely-tied package
YES	happily married couple	loosely tied package
- Never use a hyphen with COMPARATIVE (*more, less*) and SUPERLATIVE (*most, least*) compound forms.

NO	more-appropriate idea [<i>more</i> is a comparative adverb]
YES	more appropriate idea
NO	least-significant factors [<i>least</i> is a superlative adverb]
YES	least significant factors
- Never use a hyphen when a compound modifier is a foreign phrase.

YES	<i>post hoc</i> fallacies
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- Never use a hyphen with a possessive compound.

NO	a full-week's work	eight-hours' pay
YES	a full week's work	eight hours' pay

CHAPTER 29

Capitals, Italics, Abbreviations, and Numbers

CAPITALS

29a When do I capitalize a “first” word?

First word in a sentence

Always capitalize the first letter of the first word in a sentence.

● Four inches of snow fell last winter.