

Anytime the exact words of an author or a source are used, quotation marks are necessary. If no mention of the author or the source is in the text, an in-text citation is necessary. The type of citation depends on the style of documentation in use. Quotation marks are placed in front of the first quoted word and behind the last quoted word:

“He recently ate two metric tons of lutefisk,” said Herb.

Punctuation in a quoted sentence does not necessarily go at the end of the quote, even if punctuation from the quoted material is at the end of the sentence. If a citation is necessary, punctuation often is placed behind the citation:

“You can get that Miracle Whip out with bleach” (Stewart 89).

However, question marks and exclamation points remain within the quotation marks:

“How did he drink that much juice?” (McGwire, 1998, p. 70).

Quotations with omitted material. An ellipsis consists of a space, three periods separated by a space each, and a final space (. . .). Ellipses are not necessary at the beginning of a quotation. Ellipses *are* necessary when words within the quoted material are omitted or when relevant words are omitted from the end. When the omitted words form the end of the sentence, a fourth period is added to the ellipses:

Original material: The girl, who hadn’t been out in years, lost control of herself.

Cited material: “The girl...lost control of herself.”

Cited material: Robert visits “the girl, who hadn’t been out in years....”

Clarifications to a quote are added in brackets—and replace the original material:

“He hadn’t missed a payment in years.”

“[Donald Rumsfield] hadn’t missed a payment in years.”

Quotations containing errors. If there is an error in material that needs to be cited, each documentation style handles the error differently.

In MLA documentation, indicate that a quote is accurate despite an original error within it by placing the word “sic” in parentheses at the end of the quote:

“Seven out of ten women prefer Titleist” (sic).

In APA documentation, indicate that a quote is accurate by placing the word “*sic*,” italicized, in brackets after the error.

“Milhouse hasn’t [*sic*] eaten in upwards of three hours.”

Quotations and documentation style. The two major styles of general in-text citation differ slightly. Each requires different information.

MLA citation requires the author's last name and the page number that the quote is found on, with no punctuation:

“Research showed that infidelity was becoming a popular trend” (Clinton 18).

APA citation requires the author's last name, the year of publication, and the page number that the quote is found on, with commas between each:

“The operation was a terrible failure” (Jackson, 1998, p. 23).

MLA format requires that any quotations that run to more than four lines be set off by beginning a new line and indenting the entire quote from the left margin. Quotation marks are not necessary. The page number that the quote is from is placed in parentheses after the last punctuation mark of the quote; no punctuation is necessary after the citation:

Dave Barry and his son had distinctly different experiences of snowboarding:

Needless to say, my son had no trouble at all. None. In minutes he was cruising happily down the mountain; you could actually see his clothing getting baggier. I, on the other hand, spent most of my time lying on my back, groaning while space-suited Republicans swooped past and sprayed snow on me. If I hadn't gotten out of there, they'd have completely covered me. (89)

APA format requires that any quotations that are more than 40 words be set off by beginning a new line and inserting five spaces before the quote begins. Quotation marks are not necessary. The year of publication and page number that the quote is from is placed in parentheses after the last punctuation mark of the quote, unless either is specified elsewhere; no punctuation is necessary after the citation:

Dave Barry and his son had distinctly different experiences of snowboarding:

Unfortunately, this did not turn out to be one of those heartwarming cases wherein a loyal and quick-thinking ferret, seeing that its master was having a heart attack, called police and then administered snout-to-mouth resuscitation until help arrived. This was simply a case of Bandit, while walking around the house alone, stepping on the telephone speed-dial for 911. (1997, p. 116)