

MLA Formatting Quotations Owl Purdue Online Writing Lab

When you directly quote the works of others in your paper, you will format quotations differently depending on their length. Below are some basic guidelines for incorporating quotations into your paper. Please note that all pages in MLA should be **double-spaced**.

Short quotations

To indicate short quotations (fewer than four typed lines of prose or three lines of verse) in your text, enclose the quotation within double quotation marks. Provide the author and specific page citation (in the case of verse, provide line numbers) in the text, and include a complete reference on the Works Cited page. Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and semicolons should appear after the parenthetical citation. Question marks and exclamation points should appear within the quotation marks if they are a part of the quoted passage but after the parenthetical citation if they are a part of your text.

For example, when quoting short passages of prose, use the following examples:

According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.

According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Is it possible that dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184)?

When short (fewer than three lines of verse) quotations from poetry, mark breaks in short quotations of verse with a slash, (/), at the end of each line of verse (a space should precede and follow the slash).

Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long quotations

For quotations that are more than four lines of prose or three lines of verse, place quotations in a free-standing block of text and omit quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented **½ inch** from the left margin; maintain double-spacing. Only indent the first line of the quotation by an additional quarter inch if you are citing multiple paragraphs. Your parenthetical citation should come **after** the closing punctuation mark. When quoting verse, maintain original line breaks. (You should maintain double-spacing throughout your essay.)

For example, when citing more than four lines of prose, use the following examples:

Nelly Dean treats Heathcliff poorly and dehumanizes him throughout her narration:

They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it would be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (Bronte 78)