

Use of Quotation Marks and MLA In-Text Citation

In this class, we will be using MLA in-text citation for quotations and U.S. conventions of punctuation. This means that periods and commas are placed **INSIDE** quotation marks; all other punctuation marks are placed **OUTSIDE**. See the below examples and also the relevant sections in the MLA handbook, *The Bedford Handbook*, and the use of quotations in the sample papers on reserve.

Line Quotation:

The poem's title, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," is actually an ironic commentary on Prufrock's failure to develop any sustainable relationships and his own recognition of his failure to act: "I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker" (Eliot 596).

[The author's name and the relevant page number go inside the parentheses--note that there is no comma between the author's name and the page number and there is no use of ellipsis. Also, the period follows the closed parentheses.]

Line Quotation (author's name appears in the sentence):

Eliot's use of repetition, such as the refrain "In the room the women come and go/Talking of Michelangelo," demonstrates both the passage of time and Prufrock's ineffectiveness to make decisions or pursue his desires (594).

[When the author's name appears within the sentence of the quotation, you only need to include the page number within the parentheses.]

Line Quotation (referring to more than one work by the same author):

Futility appears as a theme in many of Eliot's poems, demonstrated by Prufrock's constant rhetorical questions, "And should I then presume?/And how should I begin?" ("Prufrock" 595) and images of death: "In this decayed hole among the mountains/In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing/Over the tumbled graves" ("Wasteland" 609).

[If you do not refer to the specific poems within the body of your analysis, you will need to include them within the parentheses—you would also need to include the author's name within the parentheses if his/her name does not appear within the sentence. Also, note that the titles, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" has been abbreviated to "Prufrock" and "The Wasteland" has been abbreviated to just "Wasteland."

Quotation within a Quotation:

Unbeknownst to her, Mary's assertion to her husband that "I am of no more use at home than you are" reflects all too well on her ineffectual domestic abilities (Austen 58).

[If you are quoting speech or any other type of quoted material from a text, encase single-quotation marks within double-quotation marks.]

Block Quotation:

A similar social caste arrangement exists at Lovey's middle school, where possessions define a popular clique of girls known as the Rays of the Rising Dawn:

They all have the same Japan pencils in Japan pencil cases. And the same bubble-gum-smelling erasers. They all smell like Love's Baby Soft . . . They all have straight, long black hair with long bangs behind the ears. And all kinds of clogs, not from Kinney's but from Robins . . . tiny purses they carry and their pink plastic folders . . . their glossy lips full of Kissing Smackers roll-on lipstick. And every one of them with lilac eye shadow. (Yamanaka 190-191)

Membership in the Rays of the Rising Dawn derives from material commodities rather than personal characteristics. To be a Ray of the Rising Dawn requires only the correct trappings of conspicuous consumption and wealth, like buying shoes from higher priced department stores (Robins) rather than discount shops (Kinney), having access to imported goods from Japan, and wearing the same types of cosmetics and accessories. The identity of these girls becomes predicated on the exterior markers of their social clique, their group identity affirmed through their possessions.

[If you are quoting material more than 4 lines long in your paper, you will need to indent two tabs on the left margin. Do not use double-quotation marks (unless you are citing speech—see below) and include the appropriate parenthetical information at the end of the quotation. Also, note the use of an ellipsis; it designates material taken out of the quotation that is no longer than one line. Be aware: if you use long block quotations, you will need to provide adequate analysis and close reading of the language of the quotation to warrant its inclusion in your paper. See the literary analysis that follows the long quotation above. Note: do not single-space long block quotations—they must be kept double-spaced like the rest of the paper.]

Block Quotation (with speech):

In *Beloved* Morrison shows the tension between the future as represented by Paul D's arrival at 124 and the past that surrounds Sethe:

Sethe made two fists and placed them on her hips. "You as bad as she is."

"Come on, Sethe."

"Oh, I am coming on. I am!"

"You know what I mean."

"I do and I don't like it."

(Morrison 44)

[Use double-quotation marks when citing speech in a long block quotation. Remember to double-space the long-block quotation.]

Punctuation with quotation marks:

In the reviews printed on the back cover of *Beloved*, reviewers describe Morrison's novel as "a brutally powerful, mesmerizing story," "filled with marvels," and "a triumph."

[Commas and periods go inside quotation marks. You do not need to use parenthetical citation here since there is no page number for the back cover.]