

1 Here's the Idea

Use quotation marks to set off direct quotations and some titles.

Direct and Indirect Quotations

▶ **Use quotation marks at the beginning and end of a direct quotation.**

The first word of a direct quotation is usually capitalized.

A **direct quotation** is the exact words of a writer or speaker.

The guide said, **"The giant squid is one of the largest creatures in the sea."**

Don't use quotation marks to set off an **indirect quotation**.

The guide said that the giant squid is one of the largest creatures in the sea.

Punctuation and Capitalization with Dialogue

▶ **In dialogue, punctuate a speaker's words with a comma, a question mark, or an exclamation point.**

Put end punctuation marks inside the closing quotation marks.

"Early sailors believed giant squid were sea monsters," our guide explained.

"Just how big is a giant squid?" asked Tyrell.

"Believe it or not, some may be 75 feet long!" said the guide.

▶ **Place a comma after explanatory words, such as *she said* and *he asked*, that appear at the beginning of a sentence.**

Place a period, question mark, or exclamation point inside the quotation marks at the end of the sentence.

Tyrell asked, "Just how big is a giant squid?"

For more about how to place punctuation with quotation marks, see p. 279.

▶ **Enclose both parts of a divided quotation in quotation marks.**

Do not capitalize the first word of the second part unless it begins a new sentence.

"I wonder," said Rebecca, "whether the giant squid is dangerous to humans."

"You wonder?" asked Tyrell. "Look at the size of those tentacles!"

- ▶ **Start a new paragraph and begin the paragraph with a set of quotation marks to show a change in speakers.**

“Don’t be afraid,” said Rebecca. “Although the giant squid is large, it doesn’t usually come into contact with humans.”
“I’m glad to hear that,” Tyrell replied, “because that toothed tongue looks nasty.”

- ▶ **Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.**

The guidebook says that Herman Melville called the giant squid ‘a vast pulpy mass,’ said Tyrell.

- ▶ **Colons and semicolons at the close of a quotation should be placed outside the quotation marks.**

Rebecca said, ‘I’m staying on land’; however, she soon joined us in the boat.

- ▶ **If a sentence that includes a quotation is a question or an exclamation, place the question mark or exclamation point outside the quotation marks.**

Wasn’t it Edgar Allan Poe who called the sea a ‘wilderness of glass’?

- ▶ **When a quoted fragment (a short quoted excerpt that is not a complete sentence) is inserted in a sentence, do not capitalize the first word of the fragment unless it begins a sentence or is a proper noun.**

No comma is needed to set the quotation apart from the rest of the sentence.

A 16th-century Swedish cleric described giant squid as ‘horrible forms with huge eyes.’

- ▶ **A direct quotation from an author’s work may be several paragraphs in length. Begin each paragraph with quotation marks. Place quotation marks at the end of only the last paragraph.**

If you are quoting an excerpt of five or more lines, you can set it off from the rest of the text by indenting the excerpt ten spaces and double-spacing it. Do not use quotation marks if you set off an excerpt in this way.

Titles with Quotation Marks

- Use quotation marks to set off the titles of chapters, magazine articles, short stories, TV episodes, essays, poems, and songs.

Titles with Quotation Marks

Chapter titles	“Chapter 10: Rescued!”
Articles	“An Angry Public Backs Champ”
Short stories	“By the Waters of Babylon”
TV episodes	“Two on a Raft”
Essays	“Once More to the Lake”
Poems	“Fifth Grade Autobiography”
Songs	“The Star-Spangled Banner”

For information on setting titles in italics or underlining, see p. 272.