In research writing, a student needs to use quoted material carefully. Both quotation and ellipsis marks help the writer to indicate clearly what specific information is borrowed and quoted directly from outside resources.

**Double Quotation Marks**

Use these to open and close short quotations that can be typed in four lines or fewer.

Example: “Walter Lee! . . . It’s after seven thirty. Lemme see you do some waking up in there now!” shouts Ruth Younger in Act I of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

**Single Quotation Marks**

Sometimes, the original passage you’re quoting already uses quotation marks. Change the existing double quotation marks to single quotation marks. Then, enclose the entire passage in double quotation marks. This is called “quote within a quote.”

Example: E.F. Carpenter, writing in *Contemporary Dramatists*, says of James Butterfield: “The playwright knows where his best work originated. ‘Everything that touches an audience,’ Butterfield told me, ‘comes from memories of the period when I was down and out.’”

**Block Quotes**

If the borrowed material is longer than four lines, don’t use quotation marks. Instead, indent all lines ten spaces from the left margin and keep double spaced.

Example: Sandra Cisneros’ short story “Eleven” stresses pre-teen isolation:

> What they don’t understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you’re eleven, you’re also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don’t. You open your eyes and everything’s just like yesterday, only it’s today. And you don’t feel eleven at all. You feel like you’re still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven. (233)

Note that the period goes before the MLA page citation.
Other Uses of Double Quotation Marks

☐ Titles of articles and published essays (but NOT the title of your essay)
☐ Short stories
☐ Short poems
☐ Songs
☐ Chapters of books
☐ Lectures and speeches
☐ Individual episodes of radio or TV programs
☐ Words used as words

The Ellipsis Mark

The ellipsis mark indicates that you left some material out of a direct quote. It consists of three spaced periods with a space before and after each one ( . . . ) Example: The health reporter wrote that “obese children are ten times more likely to suffer from heart attacks . . . than non-obese children.”

A. If you omit a full sentence or more in the middle of a quoted passage, or when the ellipsis coincides with the end of your sentence, use a period to end the sentence and then use the three-period ellipsis. You should have complete sentences—not fragments—on either side of a four-dot ellipsis. Example: “Most of our efforts,” writes Dave Erikson, “are directed toward saving the bald eagle’s wintering habitat along the Mississippi River . . . . It’s important that the wintering birds have a place to roost, where they can get out of the cold wind and be undisturbed by man.”

B. The ellipsis may be used to mark a hesitation or interruption in speech, to suggest unfinished thoughts or to indicate that words have been deleted from the end of a sentence. Do not use the ellipsis at the beginning of a sentence. Example: Before falling into a coma, the victim whispered, “It was a woman with a tattoo on her . . . .”

C. When necessary, add the ellipsis after question marks and exclamation points to indicate deleted material. Example: “Is Emily Bronte,” she asked, “really the equal of Jane Austen? . . . That seems unlikely.” Example: Muhammad Ali shouted, “I am the greatest! . . . Nobody can mess up my pretty face.”

D. In quoted poetry, use a full line of spaced periods to indicate that you have omitted a line or more from the poem. Example:

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.

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But at my back I always hear
Time’s winged chariot hurrying near.   —Andrew Marvell