

Quick English Compositions

Writing Effective Paragraphs and Essays



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Part I Markings

There are many different kinds of punctuation marks used in English. Markings are like traffic signs or signals that are commonly recognizable between writers and readers in order to comprehend the writers' messages. Understanding how to use markings correctly is crucial for writing commutable compositions. Here are some rule descriptions of the frequently used markings.

Unit 1 Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks:

- *when you copy or quote something that is written or spoken*
- *around titles of articles*
- *around titles of book chapters*
- *around titles of essays*
- *around titles of song*
- *around titles of short poems*

“Where did she go?” ← Punctuation inside quotation

“Where did she go”? ← Punctuation outside quotation

Quotation marks are used when you write words that are copied from somewhere. They may be from a book, magazine, journal, or something that someone said. These are called quotations or quotes. Here are some simple rules to follow:

- 1) When a period or a comma is at the end of a quotation, always place the period or comma inside the quotation mark.

Yesterday, Bill told me, “I just cannot study more.”

- 2) A colon, dash, or semicolon should always be placed outside the quotation mark when the colon, dash, or semicolon occurs at the end of the quotation.

He spoke quite loudly, “I cannot go on”; his feet, however, began moving forward.

3) Question marks can sometimes go inside the right quotation mark and sometimes outside. When the clause within the quotation is a question, the question mark is placed inside the right quotation mark.

John asked me, “Will you come with me?”

Mary quickly asked him, “Do you love me?”

4) When the quotation is not a question, the question mark must be placed outside the right quotation mark.

Do you believe she said, “I never loved him”?

How could he say, “You can’t stay with me”?

5) If both the quotation and the sentence are questions, the question mark will be placed inside the right quotation mark.

Is it possible that she asked, “When will all of the money be ready?”

6) Quotation marks are also used around the titles of articles, book chapters, essays, songs, and short poems. These titles are for things that are part of a larger work. A book title will be underlined, but a chapter title, from the book, should be placed inside quotation marks.

Spring Snow contains a chapter called “Love.”

Bobby McFerrin’s song “Don’t Worry Be Happy” is a great song to listen to.

EXERCISE:

Correct the following sentences.

1. He asked me, “How much money do you need.

2. I heard the teacher say, “You are my best student”.

3. The boss told us, “The list of your mistakes is long:” using the wrong forms, coming in late, calling the wrong customers.

4. Mary said, “I am tired of going to school so much—”Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

5. The President asked the students, “Can you work hard enough to graduate”?

6. Someone said, “Tomorrow will be better”, and I believe it.

7. You once asked me, Do you love me.

8. Did you ever hear the question, “What came first, the chicken or the egg.”

9. I like David Bowie’s song China Girl.

10. In yesterday’s paper, I saw an interesting article called Tall People Are Smarter.

11. Do you understand the statement, “I feel so very bad.”?

12. She said, “I don’t care what you think anymore”.

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