

BRACKETS

Different kinds of brackets are used in college writing and in professional writing:

1. () or ROUND BRACKETS (OR PARANTHESES)

Round brackets are used to present additional material which is not necessary for the reader. Usually, these brackets placed in sentences to help to define terms or to include information which may be of additional interest to the reader. Oftentimes, round brackets which present additional information use bracketed expressions (such as, e.g., i.e., and etc.).

EX:

Robert likes to compete in Judo (i.e., a Japanese martial art which emphasizes throwing opponents to the ground and subduing them).

2. [] or SQUARE BRACKETS

Square Brackets are punctuation marks which are used for setting apart text and for interjecting text into other text, especially quotations. Oftentimes, when a writer wants to customize a quote to fit his or her needs, they will use brackets to alter the information - making inclusions, subtractions, or other simple changes.

EX:

Original Quote: "Your father is angry with you, Timmy. You shouldn't have stayed up so late last night."

Altered Quote: "[Dan] is angry with you, Timmy [and believes that you] shouldn't [have] stayed up so late last night."

Note how the brackets can be used to alter the quote to clarify details, as well as help the rhythm of the text. You must not use brackets to change the original meaning of the message.

When material at the beginning of a quote is omitted or missing, you may use brackets at the beginning to designate that a letter has been capitalized (this may help the readability of the sentence).

EX:

"...life is a journey," says Darwin.

"[L]ife is a journey," says Darwin.

Note: When starting a sentence, no ellipsis marks are needed if the brackets are used to help the lower case letter to become upper case.

3. < > or ARROW-POINT BRACKETS (OR CHEVRONS)

Arrow-point brackets are often used to highlight material in a text. Arrow-point brackets can be used to provide short examples to items in your text.

EX:

This zoo has many different types of Corvids <ravens, magpies, crows, and bluejays>.

In some source documentation systems, Arrow-point brackets are used to enclose Uniform Resource Locators or web addresses.

EX:

<<http://www.basiccomposition.com>>

4. { } or CURLY BRACKETS (OR BRACES)

Curly brackets are used to show equal choices to an item.

EX:

Select any entree from the menu {sushi, sashimi, chicken teriyaki, and steak}.