

## PUNCTUATING QUOTATIONS

We use quotation marks to show that we are quoting someone's exact words. Observe the following rules:

(1) Use a *comma* to separate a quotation from the rest of the sentence. Use a colon instead of the comma to introduce a long or weighty quotation.

Standard Quotation: People began to say, "Less is more."

Quotation First: "There shall be no private ownership of streams," Brigham Young decreed.

Formal Quotation: She stood up slowly and announced: "This is our final offer."

Use two commas if a statement of your own interrupts a quoted sentence. Use a comma *before* your statement and a period *after* it if it interrupts two complete sentences.

Interrupted: "The approval," the inspector said, "has to come from my superior."  
"Divorce is not the problem," the article said, "The problem is how to handle it."

(2) Commas or periods stay *inside* the quotation marks when a quotation ends or is interrupted. (A semicolon usually stays outside). Keep question marks and exclamation marks *inside* the quotation marks—unless your question (or exclamation) is *about* the quotation. Use no additional comma or period if some other mark (such as a question mark) already ends a quotation.

"Do you believe me?" he finally asked. | She said, "Quit opening doors for me!"  
Why does he always say, "Time will tell"? | He said to me, "Let's just be friends!"

(3) Use *no* comma or colon to set off quoted words and phrases that you have lifted out of a longer statement.

Quoted Words: He was always denouncing "the old corrupt politics."  
The mayor claimed that the "Irish mafia" was out to get him.

(4) Use *single* quotation marks to mark a quotation within a quotation.

Single Marks: I quote the minutes: "The president rose and, pointing at Mr. S., shouted: 'You're through!'"

(5) Use *no* quotation marks or other special punctuation to set off *indirect* quotations. These merely give the gist of what someone else said, without using the exact words. Many indirect quotations start with *that*, or with question words like *when*, *where*, *how*, *why*, *who*, *which*, and *what*.

Direct: He asked me: "Why do you always make fun of me?"

Indirect: He asked me why I always made fun of him.

Direct: Susan announced: "Communications have broken down."

Indirect: Susan announced that communication had been broken down.