

APSU Writing Center

MLA Style 9th Edition - Poetry

Short Quotations

- A short quotation is four typed lines or fewer of prose or verse.
- Include the author and specific page number(s) or line numbers in the in-text citation.

Punctuation

- Question marks and exclamation points go inside quotation marks if they are part of the quoted material.
- They go after the parenthetical citation if they are part of your sentence.
 - **Example 1:** According to some, dreams express "profound aspects of personality" (Foulkes 184), though others disagree.
 - **Example 2:** According to Foulkes's study, dreams may express "profound aspects of personality" (184).

Poetry

- For quotations fewer than three lines of verse, indicate line breaks with a slash (/), with spaces before and after.
- For stanza breaks, use a double slash (//).
 - **Example:** Cullen concludes, "Of all the things that happened there / That's all I remember" (11-12).

Long Quotations

- A long quotation is more than four typed lines of prose or verse.
- Place the quotation in a free-standing block of text, starting on a new line.
- Indent the entire quote 1/2 inch from the left margin.
- Maintain double-spacing.
- The parenthetical citation comes after the closing punctuation.

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Poetry Long Citations

- Keep formatting as close to the original as possible.
 - **Example:**
In his poem "My Papa's Waltz," Theodore Roethke explores his childhood with his father:
The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.
We Romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself. (qtd. in Shrodes, Finestone, Shugrue 202)

Omitting Words in Quotations

- Use an ellipses (...) in between the words you are omitting in a quotation.
 - **Example:** In an essay on urban legends, Jan Harold Brunvand notes that "some individuals make a point of learning every recent rumor or tale . . . and in a short time a lively exchange of details occurs" (78).
- When omitting one or more full lines of poetry, Space several periods to about the length of a complete line in the poem.
 - **Poetry Example:**
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
.....
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration . . . (22-24, 28-30)



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Works Cited

MLA Handbook. 9th ed., Modern Language Association of America, 2021.

MLA Formatting and Style Guide. *The Purdue OWL*, 2 Aug. 2016,
owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.