

**APSU Writing Center**  
Exclamation & Question Marks

**Exclamation Marks (!)**

- An exclamation mark shows strong emotion, such as excitement, urgency, surprise, or enthusiasm.
- You will not use exclamation marks often in academic writing.
- However, they may appear in reflections, speeches, creative writing and direct quotations that include strong emotion.

**How Exclamation Marks Are Used**

- Use an exclamation mark to emphasize strong feeling or urgency.
- Overusing them can make your writing sound overly dramatic or less professional.
  - **Example:** You scheduled your first Writing Center appointment!
  - **Example:** Yes! I finally understood the thesis statement rule.
  - **Example:** I couldn't believe he said, "I forgot the assignment"!

**Question Marks (?)**

- A question mark is used at the end of a direct question.
- In academic writing, question marks are often used in research questions, reflective writing, and direct quotations that ask a question.

**When to use Question Marks**

- Use a question mark at the end of a direct question, at the end of a quoted question, and in sentences that directly ask or reflect on something.

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**Question Marks & Quotes**

- If the quotation itself:
  - **is a question**, place the question mark inside the quotation marks.
  - **is not a question**, but the entire sentence is, place the question mark outside the quotation marks.
  - **Example:** What’s the best way to cite a source in APA?
  - **Example:** She asked, “When is your appointment with the writing tutor?”
  - **Example:** They asked, “How do I cite this?” before moving on to the next slide.

**Extra Practice**

- Add the correct punctuation mark ( ? or ! ) at the end of each sentence or quote.
  1. When does the Writing Center close
  2. I finally finished my 10-page research paper
  3. The tutor asked, “Did you bring your outline”
  4. Make sure you submit your paper before 11:59 p.m
  5. How do I improve my thesis statement
  6. That’s the best feedback I’ve ever received

**Answers**

1. ?
2. !
3. ?
4. !
5. ?
6. !



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### References

California State University, Chico, Student Learning Center. (2020). How to punctuate quotations.

[https://www.csuchico.edu/slc/\\_assets/documents/writing-center-handouts/quotation-marks-handout.pdf](https://www.csuchico.edu/slc/_assets/documents/writing-center-handouts/quotation-marks-handout.pdf)

Panelli, M. (2011). *End punctuation* (2014). San José State University Writing

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