



Writing Centre

Poetry Quotations

These guidelines are based on the MLA Handbook, 8th Edition. For more information, go to section 1.3.3.

A quotation is a section of another person's work used word-for-word in your writing. When using a quotation, you must indicate that you are using someone else's work and include a citation.

Poetry quotations include the page number(s) in parenthesis unless the line numbers are printed in the margins.

Short Quotation:

If a quote from a poem is **three lines or less**, it is integrated into your paragraph and surrounded by quotation marks.

For example:

Poe describes the house as a "mansion of gloom" (62).

When you are quoting short sections from a poem, use a forward slash "/" to indicate line breaks. For a stanza break, use two forward slashes "/ /".

For example:

Eliot uses a series of short lines: "For Thine is / Life is / For Thine is the" (92-94).

Sometimes you will need to change the quote to be grammatically correct in your sentence.

Use "[]" to indicate what you have changed and "..." to show if you have skipped a section.

For example:

Roderick's family was "[devoted] to the intricacies...of musical science" (Poe 63).

Long Quotation:

If a quote from a poem is **four or more lines**, it is separated from your paragraph by one line and **indented one half inch** from the left margin without quotation marks. When quoting a long section of poetry, follow the formatting of the original text.

For Example:

The poem begins with dramatic imagery:

Having found the flower and driven a bee away,
I leaned my head,
And holding by the stalk,
I listened and I thought I caught the word— (Frost 78)