



Short vs Long Quotations

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In MLA Style, there's a difference between how you quote short quotations vs long quotations. **Short quotations** (3 lines or fewer of poetry or 4 lines or fewer of prose) are integrated into your text by means of **quotation marks**. By contrast, **long**

quotations (more than 3 lines of poetry or more than 4 lines of prose) are indicated in your text by means of a **block quotation**. Try to use a judicious mixture of long and short quotations in your essays.

Short Quotations

To quote **3 lines or fewer of poetry** or **4 lines or fewer of prose**, **integrate the quotation**: put the quotation in **quotation marks** within your text.

Long Quotations

To quote **more than 3 lines of poetry** or **more than 4 lines of prose**, use a **block quotation**: start the quotation on a **new line** and **double-indent** each line.

Poetry

In "Tintern Abbey," William Wordsworth writes, "Five years have passed; five summers, with the length / Of five long winters! and again I hear / These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs" (1-3).

Poetry

In "Tintern Abbey," William Wordsworth writes:
Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
.
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky. (1-8)

Prose

In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth writes, "The principal object . . . proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them . . . in a selection of language really used by men" (x).

Prose

In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth writes:
The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.... (x-xi)

Notes

- Use a slash to indicate the beginning of a new line in the original text of poetry. Do not use slashes to indicate line breaks in prose.
- Cite line numbers only for poetry and page numbers only for prose.
- Omit punctuation at the end of quotations. Punctuate the sentence as needed at the end of the parenthetical reference.
- Use ellipses to omit brief portions from the middle (not the beginning or end) of quotations, and use brackets to reword brief portions of direct quotations.

Notes

- In block quotations, quote poetry according to its linear arrangement in the original text, and not with slashes. Line breaks need not be indicated in quotations of prose.
- Cite line numbers only for poetry and page numbers only for prose, even in block quotations.
- In block quotations, place the terminal period *before* the parenthetical reference at the end of the citation, not *after* the parenthetical reference as in the case of non-block quotations.
- In block quotations of poetry only, indicate an ellipsis with an entire line of spaced periods, and not with three or four spaced periods as in the case of prose.