

III

A Few Matters of Form

Colloquialisms. If you use a colloquialism or a slang word or phrase, simply use it; do not draw attention to it by enclosing it in quotation marks. To do so is to put on airs, as though you were inviting the reader to join you in a select society of those who know better.

Exclamations. Do not attempt to emphasize simple statements by using a mark of exclamation.

It was a wonderful show! It was a wonderful show.

The exclamation mark is to be reserved for use after true exclamations or commands.

What a wonderful show!

Halt!

Headings. If a manuscript is to be submitted for publication, leave plenty of space at the top of page 1. The editor will need this space to write directions to the compositor. Place the heading, or title, at least a fourth of the way down the page. Leave a blank line, or its equivalent in space, after the heading. On succeeding pages, begin near the top, but not so near as to give a crowded appearance. Omit the period after a title or heading. A question mark or an exclamation point may be used if the heading calls for it.

Hyphen. When two or more words are combined to form a compound adjective, a hyphen is usually required. “He belonged to the leisure class and enjoyed leisure-class pursuits.” “She entered her boat in the round-the-island race.”

Do not use a hyphen between words that can better be written as one word: *water-fowl*, *waterfowl*. Common sense will aid you in the decision, but a dictionary is more reliable. The steady evolution of the language seems to favor union: two words eventually become one, usually after a period of hyphenation.

bed chamber	bed-chamber	bedchamber
wild life	wild-life	wildlife
bell boy	bell-boy	bellboy

The hyphen can play tricks on the unwary, as it did in Chattanooga when two newspapers merged—the *News* and the *Free Press*. Someone introduced a hyphen into the merger, and the paper became *The Chattanooga News-Free Press*, which sounds as though the paper were news-free, or devoid of news. Obviously, we ask too much of a hyphen when we ask it to cast its spell over words it does not adjoin.

Margins. Keep righthand and lefthand margins roughly the same width. Exception: If a great deal of annotating or editing is anticipated, the lefthand margin should be roomy enough to accommodate this work.

Numerals. Do not spell out dates or other serial numbers. Write them in figures or in Roman notation, as appropriate.

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Exception: When they occur in dialogue, most dates and numbers are best spelled out.

“I arrived home on August ninth.”

“In the year 1990, I turned twenty-one.”

“Read Chapter Twelve.”

Parentheses. A sentence containing an expression in parentheses is punctuated outside the last mark of parenthesis exactly as if the parenthetical expression were absent. The expression within the marks is punctuated as if it stood by itself, except that the final stop is omitted unless it is a question mark or an exclamation point.

I went to her house yesterday (my third attempt to see her), but she had left town.

He declares (and why should we doubt his good faith?) that he is now certain of success.

(When a wholly detached expression or sentence is parenthesized, the final stop comes before the last mark of parenthesis.)

Quotations. Formal quotations cited as documentary evidence are introduced by a colon and enclosed in quotation marks.

The United States Coast Pilot has this to say of the place:
“Bracy Cove, 0.5 mile eastward of Bear Island, is exposed to southeast winds, has a rocky and uneven bottom, and is unfit for anchorage.”

A quotation grammatically in apposition or the direct object of a verb is preceded by a comma and enclosed in quotation marks.

I am reminded of the advice of my neighbor, “Never worry about your heart till it stops beating.”

Mark Twain says, “A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read.”

When a quotation is followed by an attributive phrase, the comma is enclosed within the quotation marks.

“I can’t attend,” she said.

Typographical usage dictates that the comma be inside the marks, though logically it often seems not to belong there.

“The Fish,” “Poetry,” and “The Monkeys” are in Marianne Moore’s *Selected Poems*.

When quotations of an entire line, or more, of either verse or prose are to be distinguished typographically from text matter, as are the quotations in this book, begin on a fresh line and indent. Quotation marks should not be used unless they appear in the original, as in dialogue.

Wordsworth’s enthusiasm for the French Revolution was at first unbounded:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!

Quotations introduced by *that* are indirect discourse and not enclosed in quotation marks.

Keats declares that beauty is truth, truth beauty.
Dickinson states that a coffin is a small domain.

Proverbial expressions and familiar phrases of literary origin require no quotation marks.

These are the times that try men’s souls.
He lives far from the madding crowd.

References. In scholarly work requiring exact references, abbreviate titles that occur frequently, giving the full forms in an alphabetical list at the end. As a general practice, give the references in parentheses or in footnotes, not in the body of the sentence. Omit the words *act*, *scene*, *line*, *book*, *volume*, *page*, except when referring to only one of them. Punctuate as indicated below.

in the second scene of the third act	in III.ii (Better still, simply insert III.ii in parentheses at the proper place in the sentence.)
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After the killing of Polonius, Hamlet is placed under guard (IV.ii.14).

2 Samuel i:17–27

Othello II.iii. 264–267, III.iii.155–161

Syllabication. When a word must be divided at the end of a line, consult a dictionary to learn the syllables between which division should be made. The student will do well to examine the syllable division in a number of pages of any carefully printed book.

Titles. For the titles of literary works, scholarly usage prefers italics with capitalized initials. The usage of editors and publishers varies, some using italics with capitalized initials, others using Roman with capitalized initials and with or without quotation marks. Use italics (indicated in manuscript by underscoring) except in writing for a periodical that follows a different practice. Omit initial *A* or *The* from titles when you place the possessive before them.

A Tale of Two Cities; Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*.

The Age of Innocence; Wharton's *Age of Innocence*.