

## How to Quote Verse

### Title and Reference Format

- ❖ Italicize the titles of books or long poems published as books.

*Leaves of Grass* or *The Rape of the Lock*

- ❖ Use quotation marks for the titles of works published within larger works — like short poems.

“Song of Myself” or “Kubla Khan”

- ❖ Refer to untitled poems by their first line.

“Go and catch a falling star” or “So, we’ll go no more a-roving”

- ❖ Refer to numbered poems, like sonnets in a sonnet sequence, by their number.

Sonnet 20 or Canto 45

- ❖ Place a parenthetical reference after each verse quotation containing its line numbers. Do *not* use page numbers.

Cite line-number ranges under 100 like this: 34–37. Above 100, repeat only the last two digits of the second number: 211–12 (but of course, 397–405 and 96–102). Place an en dash [ – ], not a hyphen [ - ], between the range numbers.

Use arabic, *not* roman, numerals to cite all numbered sections and subsections of a poem (books, stanzas, lines, and so on).

*The Faerie Queene* (1.6.334–42) or *Paradise Lost* (4.634–58)

- ❖ Periods and commas *always* go inside quotation marks.

“Periods and commas,” says Dr. Womack, “*always* go inside quotation marks.”

### Brief Verse Quotations

- ❖ If you quote all or part of a single line of verse, put it in quotation marks within your text.

The line “Quoth the raven, ‘Nevermore’” becomes a haunting refrain in Poe’s “The Raven.”

- ❖ You may also incorporate two or three lines in the same way, using a slash with a space on each side [ / ] to separate them.

Donne opens the second stanza with an impassioned plea: “Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare, / Where we almost, nay more than married are” (10–11).

- ❖ Use two slashes [ // ] to indicate a stanza break in a quotation.

Keats often makes masterfully subtle use of alliteration: “And with thee fade into the forest dim: // Fade far away, dissolve and quite forget / What thou among the leaves hast never known” (20–22).

### Block Quotations

- ❖ Set verse quotations of more than three lines as block quotations: start a new line and set each line one inch in from the left margin, adding no quotation marks not appearing in the original.

The parenthetical reference for a block quotation follows the last line of the quotation. If the parenthetical reference won't fit on the line, put it on a new line, flush with the *right* page margin.

Emily Dickinson's ballad meter quatrain evokes the arbitrary cruelty of the natural world:

Apparently with no surprise  
To any happy Flower  
The Frost beheads it at its play —  
In accidental power — (1–4)

- ❖ When a verse quotation begins in the middle of a line, reproduce it that way, do not shift it to the left margin.

Ben Jonson proclaims Shakespeare's unique position in English literature:

I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie  
A little further to make thee room:  
Thou art a monument without a tomb (19–22)



## Ellipses

- ❖ Use an ellipsis with a space on each side [ ... ] to indicate the omission of words or phrases from within a verse quotation.

In Hardy's "The Ruined Maid," the speaker feels jealous of the woman she meets: "I wish I had feathers ... And a delicate face" (21–22).

- ❖ Indicate the omission of a line or more in the middle of a block quotation with a row of spaced periods roughly the length of a full line of the quoted poem.

The closing stanza of "The Tyger" echoes the opening stanza almost exactly:

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

. . . . .

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry? (1–4, 21–24)