

Name:  
Date:

Period:  
Ms. Lopez

## QUOTATION MANIPULATION AND NOTATION: BRACKETS, THE ELLIPSIS, AND YOU

**You must copy the quotation exactly as it appears in its original form, following all capitalization and punctuation.** Sometimes, the quote needs to be altered from its original wording. In this class, you can alter a quote in many ways as long as you follow the MLA rules of notation.

### ☀ **Brackets** [ ]

Brackets are used to add words to a quote. Brackets serve a variety of purposes.

#### **When to use brackets...**

- ◆ to make the quotation grammatically correct within the context of your sentence.

Original: There was enough water for two more days. They were all aware of what would happen if they were to run out of water.

Quotation: They always knew they were “run[ning] out of water” soon.

(First, try to alter your wording to fit the quote: They knew they would “run out of water” soon.)

- ◆ to clarify a pronoun

Quotation: “Alice carried it [the letter] with her at all times”

- ◆ to further bring out your point

Quotation: “Artie hunched over as a result of the weight of his [too heavy] backpack.”  
*(Here the writer wanted to stress weight of the backpack.)*

### ☀ **The Ellipsis** ...

An ellipsis indicates that a word or words were removed from a complete sentence. **No ellipsis is needed when words are removed from the beginning of a quote or you are clearly only quoting part of a sentence because the quote is only a very short phrase.** They are required in all other situations

#### **When to use an ellipsis...**

- ◆ to remove words from the middle of a quote, use an ellipsis

Original: I was walking through the park one day in the merry merry month of May.

Quotation: There “was walking ... one day in the merry ... month of May.”

- ◆ to remove words from the end of a quote, use an ellipsis

Original: I was walking through the park one day in the merry merry month of May.

Quotation: The speaker recalls, “I was walking through the park one day ....”

- ◆ to remove complete sentences from in between two quoted sentences, place a period BEFORE the ellipsis

Original: “If the Civil Rights Movement is dead, and it gave us nothing else, it gave us each forever and always. It gave us a means to come together. It gave some of us heartbreak and agony, but it brought all of us comfort.”

Quotation: “If the Civil Rights movement is dead, and it gave us nothing else, it gave us each forever and always. ... It gave some of us heartbreak and agony, but it brought all of us comfort.”

- ◆ To remove the end of one sentence and complete sentences in between two quotes sentences, place a period AFTER the ellipsis

Original: “If the Civil Rights Movement is dead, and it gave us nothing else, it gave us each forever and always. It gave us a means to come together. It gave some of us heartbreak and agony, but it brought all of us comfort.”

Quotation: “If the Civil Rights Movement is dead, and it gave us nothing else, it gave us each forever .... It gave some of us heartbreak and agony, but it brought all of us comfort.”

## ☀ An Ellipsis in Brackets [...]

- ◆ If the original text has an ellipsis and you want to take out words, you should place *your* ellipsis within brackets to show you added it

Original: It was ... interesting to meet you, to say the least.

Quotation: “It was ... interesting [...].”

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Practice using brackets and ellipses with this excerpt from “Riders on the Earth Together.” In each of the four quotes below, words that have been added are in italics, and words that are taken out are crossed out. On another sheet of paper, rewrite each quotation using the proper brackets and ellipses.

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[Sorry, but I can't place the original text on the website for fear of violating copyright laws. You should, however,

be able to complete the assignment without it.]

1. “Men's conception ~~of themselves and of each other~~ has always depended on their notion of the earth.”
2. “Men's conception of themselves and of each other has always depended on their notion of ~~the earth~~. ~~When the earth was the World—~~ all the world there was ~~—and the stars were lights in Dante's heaven, and the ground beneath men's feet roofed Hell, they saw themselves as creatures at the center of the universe.~~”
3. MacLeish contends that humanity perceives itself as the “center” of importance.
4. MacLeish believes that “from that high place *of self-importance* they ruled and killed and conquered as ~~they pleased.~~”