

Special Edition: National Punctuation Day

We get so excited we scarcely can contain ourselves when our favorite writing-oriented day rolls around! Today we will honor quotation marks.

In general, you should use quotation marks to indicate quoted material—things that other people said, wrote, or thought. Of course, there are various techniques for formatting quoted material, depending on how much material you are quoting, whether you are directly or indirectly quoting something, and other considerations. Please see your company's style guide for more details (we recommend *The Chicago Manual of Style* if you aren't required to use a particular style guide).

Quotation marks are also used for titles of compositions such as books, movies, and periodicals. The rules for which kinds of titles require quotation marks vary depending on the style guide you're using.

You may also use quotation marks to indicate words or terms that may not be familiar to your audience or are used in an ironic sense. But please, don't use quotation marks to highlight words you want to "emphasize" or think are "important." That's just wrong. (Don't capitalize such words either, but that's a rant for another day.)

Single or double quotation marks? In American English, we use double quotation marks, with single marks used to indicate quotes within quotes. In the UK and Ireland, they typically do the opposite.

Oh, and one more thing. Where does the punctuation go—inside or outside the quotation marks? As is often the case, it depends: on the type of punctuation, the relationship of the punctuation to the quoted material, and the stipulations of your mandated style guide. Happily, the big two (*Chicago* and the *Associated Press Stylebook*) agree on this:

- Periods: inside
- Commas: inside
- Colons: outside, unless they are part of the quoted material
- Semicolons: outside
- Exclamation points: outside, unless they are part of the quoted material
- Question marks: inside or outside, depending on the meaning

However, some industry-specific style guides such as *The ACS Style Guide* may have slightly different rules for placement of punctuation. Check to make sure.

Got that? Have a happy National Punctuation Day!

We hope you enjoyed this special edition of *KB CommEntary*. Stay tuned for our regular Fall 2016 issue, coming in a few weeks.

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

Kathy

Kathy Breuninger

KB COMM

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