

## Using Quotations in Answering Questions

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### DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR USING QUOTES

A **source** is from written or spoken words from somebody beside yourself. Sources are frequently used when we study some topic.

A **quotation** comes from the exact words spoken by somebody or written in a book or other source. **We use quotations when the original source is the best way to give the information you want to give to the reader.** Whenever you use the exact words of a source, you must put them in quotes.

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### WHEN TO USE QUOTES

**Quotes** are shown by the use of **quotation marks**. The quotation marks start before the exact words and end immediately afterwards. Often we start giving a quote by saying who it comes from. Here is an example

*President Barack Obama said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."*

Barack Obama, Feb. 5, 2008

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### WHEN NOT TO USE QUOTES

Quotations are often overused, especially by students learning English and the academic culture of the United States. In many cultures, it is expected that students should take the exact words of a source and use them as a way to show respect for that source. In the US, we often use the ideas of others, but try to put them in our own words. We show respect for those sources by showing where we get the information, but **we try not to use quotes too much**. If we only use quotes or use quotes to make the main points in our writing, then it seems as if the writing is not our own, but that of the source. Quotes are used more for impact and for getting exactly the right statement when nothing else will do. **Use them, but don't overuse them.**

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### HOW USE QUOTES

It's important to set off quotes with quotation marks, " ". Quotes are usually introduced with a phrase such as, "He said, ..." "She said, ..." "He added, ..." "She noted, .... " All of these phrases are followed with a comma. You can practice the use of these quotation marks in SkillsTutor.

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## WHEN TO USE QUOTES WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN A DISCUSSION WEB

The following is an answer to the first question about Number the Stars:

Here's the question:

How has the world changed for the King and the other people in the story since the war began?

Here is an answer that uses quotes:

The world changed dramatically for the Danish people after World War II began. Before the war, the Danish people were used to seeing their king ride around Copenhagen on his horse, but afterwards the author tells us, "King Christian was getting old, and he had been badly injured last year in a fall from his horse ..." (p. 16) The author tells us the king is older and injured as a way to tell us the Danish people are injured, but they are still fighting back.

There are a number of things to note about the use of the quote in this answer.

1. The paragraph starts with a direct answer to the question rather than with a quote.
2. The quote that is used is short and to the point. There are not a number of passages from the source.
3. The quote supports the point made by the writer rather than making the point. In other words, the writer tells us first that 'The world changed dramatically.' She then contrasts what the Danish people normally saw of the King with what happened after the war started.
4. The quote comes in the second sentence.
5. The quote is introduced. We know who the quote comes from.
6. After the quote is introduced, there is a comma, not a period.
7. The quotation marks come at the beginning of the words from the book and end when the writer is no longer quoting the source. There is no need to use bold type, italics, or underlining.
8. Quotation marks come at the end.
9. The quote starts with a capital letter.
10. There is a series of periods (...) to show the sentence in the source did not end. This tells us the writer doesn't need the whole sentence from the source to make her point.
11. You can give a more complete answer by explaining a quote, as above.

**When you answer the questions in the discussion web or on the test, you may use quotes to support your answer, but follow the guidelines in this handout.**