Department of Literature and Creative Writing
Form for Quotations

SHORT QUOTATION, POETRY OR PROSE:
Incorporate a short quotation into your own text. Put quotation marks around it, and use a slash to indicate a line break in poetry (but not in prose).
Example, poetry:
According to the speaker of Shakespeare's Sonnet 129, lust is "past reason hunted; and no sooner had, / Past reason hated" (6-7).

Example, prose:
The narrator introduces the final scene by explaining that his 'utter madness" began "by [his] going to church" (313), and it is this very episode that results in the narrator's revelation.

LONGER QUOTATION, POETRY:
When a verse quotation is longer than three lines, indent each line one inch from the left margin, and omit quotation marks.
Example:
In Sonnet 97, the speaker uses metaphors of the seasons to describe absence:

> How like a winter hath my absence been
> From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
> What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
> What old December's bareness everywhere!
> And yet this time removed was summer's time. (1-5)

LONGER QUOTATION, PROSE:
When a prose quotation extends for more than four lines in your text, use block quotation form. Begin the quotation on a new line; indent it one inch from the left margin; and omit the quotation marks. Place the parenthetical citation after the final punctuation mark.
Example:
Through the miracle of her painting – of bringing a vision to life – she can define a moment, find a meaning, and freeze it before the external world refutes it or carries it away. This mediation between the outside world and her ideas of it is furthered when Lily completes her painting:

> There it was—her picture. Yes, with all its greens and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. (207-8)

Lily thus manages to create a physical embodiment of her internal self that exists externally from herself. Her vision – her thought processes, her interpretations – now exists in the external world. It does not matter if no one sees it; it does not matter if it is lost or ruined.

Be cautious in using block quotations. Before using a block quotation, consider how much text you need to make your point. It is easier to guide your reader's understanding if you use more frequent, shorter quotations.

For further information, see *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, seventh edition*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009. Print.
  Thank you to Maggie Boyd '17 for the example of the prose block quotation.   12/15