

# “Can I Quote You on That?” Some Rules for Quotation Marks

## Capitalization Rules

**Rule #1: Always capitalize if the quote is a complete sentence**

Daniel said, “**P**eople who text and drive are stupid.”

**\*Rule #2: Do not capitalize if the quote is not a complete sentence or is introduced by “that”**

Daniel said that drivers who text “**a**re stupid.”

Daniel said **that** “**p**eople who text and drive are stupid.”

\* Do not use a comma after the word “that”

**Rule #3: If a quote is interrupted, capitalize the second part only if it’s a new sentence**

“I wasn’t allowed to eat before my CAT scan,” said Josh. “**B**ecause of this, I was so hungry.”

“I wasn’t allowed to eat before my CAT scan,” said Josh, “**a**nd I was so hungry.”

## Punctuation Rules

**Rule #1: Commas are used after dialogue tags and introductory elements:**

Our professor said, “I love the Oxford comma.”

According to Kim, “Chili is the best on a rainy day.”

**Rule #2: Commas are also used when a quote is interrupted**

“My computer always knows when I’m in a hurry,” said Elise, “so I never procrastinate.”

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## Inside or Outside: More Punctuation Rules

### **\*\*Rule #3: Commas and periods go *inside* the quotation marks**

Because readers are “easily confused,” writers should punctuate correctly.

We went up to the mountains last weekend to “catch the meteor shower.”

\*\*This rule may change when citing a quote. MLA style, for example, requires the period to go after the in-text citation: “Quotes are always fun” (Kipps 42).

### **Rule #4: Semicolons and colons belong *outside* the quotation marks**

George was adamant that men “don’t need directions”; however, he ended up driving in circles.

Lisa hated babysitting for “two obvious reasons”: diapers and tantrums.

### **Rule #5: For exclamation and question marks, it depends on the meaning of the sentence**

Did John say “Let’s go to the movies tonight”?

John asked, “Does anyone want to go to the movies tonight?”

### **Rule #6: For a quote within a quote, use single quotation marks**

“Jamie believes that grad school is a ‘step in the right direction.’”