

Brackets

Brackets are used to emphasize information or alert the reader that something has been changed or added to an existing quote. Inside a quote, you may need to add an explanation of a word or phrase; that information must have brackets around it to alert the reader that this information isn't part of the quote. In addition, you may need to alter the quote for it to grammatically fit inside your sentence. The altered section must be offset with brackets. *Remember, when you add or take away from a quote, you must never alter the meaning of the original quote.*

- Brackets used to *offset* a word or phrase that is a part of a sentence, clause, or phrase already offset within parenthesis.
 - Not everyone understood the reason (especially the Future Teachers of America [FTA] members) for her outburst. Note: The brackets are used within a parenthetical to introduce the abbreviations for Future Teachers of America.
- You may use brackets inside a quotation in which you *add* a word or phrase or *change* a word.
 - Johns wrote, “You cannot take them [the chickens] from the farmers.” The bracketed information provides the reader with the antecedent of the “them”—the chickens.
- You may use brackets to *alert* the reader of a misspelled word that is inside a quote. You will use the [*sic*], which means “so”. Note that the sic within the brackets is italicized, but the brackets are not.
 - The student wrote, “I don't want to talk about the prinsiple [*sic*] cause of my attitude. In this quote, principle is misspelled. You don't correct the misspelled word, but you should alert your reader that you are aware of the misspelled word, but you are not changing the integrity of the student's work.