

Quoting Poetry

Why are poetry and prose quoted differently in essays?

The format of poetry quotations informs the reader in a nonverbal way that the quoted passage is from a poem, *not* a prose piece. Essentially, the two formats differ to improve the clarity and ease of reading an essay.

To quote three lines or less...

This quotation looks like...

⇒ **Place a forward slash (/) between each quoted line**

The citation will list the line numbers, rather than the page numbers used in prose citation.

- Dickinson describes the sound as “A Service, like a Drum— / Kept beating—beating—till I thought / My Mind was going numb—” (6-8).

To quote four or more lines...

This quotation looks like...

⇒ **Use the same format and line breaks as the original source**

- Dickinson describes her mental anguish during her illness as a metaphorical funeral:

*I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
And Mourners to and fro
Kept treading—treading—till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through—*

*And when they all were seated,
A Service, like a Drum—
Kept beating—beating—till I thought
My Mind was going numb— (1-8)*

To indicate deleted sections...

This quotation looks like...

⇒ **Use an ellipses (...)**

If the ellipsis is used to indicate an entire omitted line, the ellipsis should be the same approximate length as the original line in the poem

- In describing the funeral, Dickinson says
*And Mourners...
Kept treading—treading—till it seemed
That Sense was breaking through—
.....
A Service, like a Drum— (2-4, 6)*

To clarify a reference...

This quotation looks like...

⇒ **Use brackets within the quotation**

- Dickinson says, “And when they [the mourners] all were seated / A Service, ... / Kept beating—beating...” (5-7).