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Oops!

Do I Do That?

Quote
vs.
Quotation

Quote is a verb;
quotation is a noun.

Although they are used interchangeably, *quote* and *quotation* actually have very different meanings. Writers should avoid using *quote* to mean a quotation from someone.

YES: "Can I quote you on that?"

YES:
"I love that famous Kennedy quotation about what you can do for your country."

NO:
"Do you remember that famous quote from Kennedy about community service?"

kelcilynn.com

584 Castro Street #267
San Francisco, CA
94114

(415) 378-8239
info@kelcilynn.com

www.kelcilynn.com

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Serial Commas

Many writers are unsure about using a comma before "and" when listing three or more items. For example, should a sentence read "I went to the store, bank and post office" or "I went to the store, bank, and post office"? (Note the comma after *bank* in the second sentence.)

Using a comma after every item in a list of three or more items is considered standard by the Chicago Manual of Style, APA, and many others. In the following example sentence used by Diana Hacker in [A Writer's Reference](#), what exactly is being willed?

My uncle willed me all of his property, houses and warehouses.

The absence of the comma after *houses* makes the sentence unclear: does the property only include houses and warehouses, or did my uncle will me three things (property, houses, and warehouses)? Most style guidelines strongly encourage writers to use serial commas in virtually all circumstances.

Some confusion may arise from this, however, as the Associated Press does *not* follow the serial comma rule. Consequently, articles in most major newsmagazines and newspapers will be lacking the serial comma unless their publisher's house style dictates otherwise.

Nifty Word of the Month

Looking for a perfect word to describe something very large that seems to look back at you? Creative writers, take note:

Cyclopean, *adjective*:

often capitalized: of, relating to, or characteristic of a Cyclops; huge, massive

(Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, August 29, 2008)

Personal Space(s)

Still using two (or more) spaces after the punctuation mark at the end of a sentence? It's time to let it go; usage guidelines now specify that only one space is needed between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next.

Interestingly, this practice is thought to be leftover from when typewriters were in use. Now that computers are common, however, single spacing is considered standard.

Have a Grammar Question You'd Like Answered?

If you have a grammar question that you'd like answered, feel free to send it to kelcilynn.com. Many questions can be answered via email, and interesting topics might be selected for the next newsletter.

Send any emails to info@kelcilynn.com.

Shortening Long URLs

Many Web sites have URLs that are unruly in length. If you need to insert a URL into a document or email but find that the address itself is very long, check out <http://www.tinyurl.com>. You can enter your URL into a box on the site, and it generates a "tiny URL" that is specific for your page (and often just a six-digit alphanumeric code). For example, <http://www.kelcilynn.com/newsletter> becomes <http://tinyurl.com/68bgen>.

It's bookmark worthy!

<http://www.tinyurl.com>