ELLIPSES & SLASHES

The Ellipsis Mark

The ellipsis mark consists of three spaced periods. **Use an ellipsis mark to indicate you have deleted words from an otherwise word-for-word quotation**.

> **Example:** Reuben reports that "when the amount of cholesterol circulating in the blood rises over . . . 300 milligrams per 100, the chances of a heart attack increase dramatically."

If you delete a full sentence or more in the middle of a quoted passage, **use a period before the three ellipsis dots.**

> **Example:** "Most of our efforts," writes Dave Erikson, "are directed toward saving the bald eagle's wintering habitat along the Mississippi River. . . . It's important that the wintering birds have a place to roost, where they can get out of the cold wind and be undisturbed by man."

In quoted poetry, use a full line of dots to indicate that you have dropped a line or more from the poem:

> **Example:**
>
> Had we but world enough, and time,
>
> This coyness, lady, were no crime.
>
> . . . .
>
> But at my back I always hear
>
> Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
>
> ---Andrew Marvell

The ellipsis mark may also be used to mark a hesitation or interruption in speech or to suggest unfinished thoughts.

> **Example:** Before falling into a coma, the victim whispered, "It was a man with a tattoo on his. . . ."

The Slash

Use the slash to separate two or three lines of poetry. Add a space both before and after the slash.

> **Example:** In the opening lines of "Jordan," George Herbert pokes gentle fun at popular poems of his time: "Who says that fictions only and false hair / Become a verse? Is there in truth no beauty?"

However, more than three lines of poetry should be handled as an indented quotation.

The slash may occasionally be used to separate options such as pass/fail and producer/director.

Do not use a space before or after the slash when used this way.

> **Example:** Roger Sommers, the play's producer/director, announced a change in casting.

Note: However, this kind of slash should be used infrequently.

Hacker, Diana. The Bedford Handbook for Writers. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1991