

Ellipsis . . .

When you choose to omit a word, phrase, sentence, or more from a quoted passage you will signal your omission with the use of an ellipsis. Avoid omitting too much material between the start and end of your quotation. Instead provide two separate quotations.

--If you quote only a word or a phrase, you do not need to use an ellipsis before and after:

According to Annie Dillard, a weasel sleeps with his tail rather strangely “draped over his nose” (23).

--If your quotation reproduces an independent clause or more from the original sentence, you must use an ellipsis:

Dillard notes that “. . . he stalks rabbits, mice, muskrats, and birds . . .” (23).

--If you omit a word or words between the first and last words you quote, you must use an ellipsis:

Dillard recounts an incident where “a man shot an eagle . . . and found the dry skull of a weasel fixed by the jaws to this throat” (23).

--When to use an ellipsis with a period:

1. When the ellipsis occurs at the end of your sentence:

Dillard describes the weasel’s style of attack: “Obedient to instinct, he bites his prey at the neck, either splitting the jugular vein at the throat or crunching the brain at the base of the skull . . .”

2. When you’re using a parenthetical reference:

Dillard describes the weasel’s style of attack: “Obedient to instinct, he bites his prey at the neck, either splitting the jugular vein at the throat or crunching the brain at the base of the skull . . .” (23).

3. When the words you quote complete the source’s sentence and you omit one or more sentences before continuing the quotation:

Dillard considers the wild habits of these creatures: “A weasel is wild. . . . Outside he stalks rabbits, mice, muskrats, and birds . . .” (23).

4. When you omit words from the middle of one sentence to the beginning of another sentence:

“One naturalist refused to kill a weasel who was socketed into his hand The man could in no way pry the weasel off . . .” (23).