



## APSU Writing Center

### Brackets, Angle Brackets, & Braces

#### Square Brackets []

- Brackets are defined as a pair of marks [ ] used to enclose words or figures so as to separate them from the context. In writing they are used to insert explanations, corrections, clarifications, or comments into quoted material.
  - *Parentheses* - encloses additional information in your own writing.
  - *Brackets* - insert comments into someone else's words you are quoting or into a passage already in parentheses.

#### How to use Square Brackets []

- **Indicate you have inserted your own words into a quotation.**
  - Example: Dr. Johnston said, "He [Jeremy] finished the research paper last month."
- **Insert information within parentheses.**
  - Example: While cleaning my closet, I found clothes I no longer wear (including hats, pants, dresses [formal], and shoes).
- **Insert state directions into a play.**
  - Example: [King Lear enters]
  - Example: [Raoul places a rose at Christine's grave]
- **To indicate an error in the original quotation the word "sic" (which means "thus" or "so") is used after the word containing the error enclosed in square brackets.**
  - Example: Dr. Casey says of his research, "I strongly believe that animal-to-human tansplantation [sic] is widely underutilized in the US." (transplantation)
  - Example: "This sentence contains an eror [sic]." (error)
  - Example: Don't you think that every one [sic] should attend the meeting? (everyone)

#### In-text citations

- **IEEE Style**
  - Refer to the source you are citing with a number in square brackets that will refer to your full citation in the references page. Use the same number for each time you cite the same source. Example: [2].
  - Use a comma or dash between numbers when citing multiple sources: [2], [6], [7] or [2] - [3].
- **APA Style**
  - Brackets are often used when referencing podcasts or podcast episodes.
    - podcast examples: [Audio podcast], [Video podcast].
    - podcast episode examples: [Audio podcast episode], [Video podcast episode].
    - citation Example: Meraji, S. M., & Demby, G. (Hosts). (2016–present). Code switch [Audio podcast]. National Public Radio. <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch>



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#### Angle Brackets < >

- Angle Brackets are defined as either of a pair of marks in the form < > used to enclose words or figures so as to separate them from their context.
- These are rarely used in English, but often appear in mathematic equations, computer programming, or to indicate foreign speech.
- **Informal Writing Example:**
  - Indicate foreign speech in comic Strips, books, graphic novels.
    - Traveler: I am here to help you?
    - Tourist #1: <<What is she saying?>>
    - Tourist #2: <<I don't know. Perhaps she needs directions?>>

#### Braces {}

- Braces are used to group items or to show a relationship among lines, symbols, or formulas in mathematical, statistical, or chemical equations. They are often used in mathematics, logic, computer programming, and linguistics.
  - **Equal Choices:** {red, blue, green}
  - **Numbers:** E= {3, 6, 9, 12, 15}
  - **Music:** [ {c, e, g} {e, g, c2} {g, c2, e2} ]
    - Note that in the music example, there are 3 sets of items, so the braces separate each set. Then the entire 3 sets are enclosed in square brackets, which serves to “hold” the 3 sets of items that are in braces.



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