Quabbin Quills

Editorial Guide and Sample Submissions for Authors

3rd Edition, 2025

Page Setup

All finished pieces must be submitted in Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1.5 spacing.

Only one space after periods.

Remove all headers and footers, such as an author's name and page numbers.

Please title your piece and format the title in italics centered at the top of the page.

Below your title, please write your first and last name.

Please format poetry using left align. The only exception to this is if you are choosing to use a different alignment because it is meaningful/important in the context of your poem.

Please see the Sample Submissions at the end of the PDF for a visual example.

Commas

A **nonessential clause**, or a phrase that technically is not needed in the main sentence (like this part), needs to be surrounded by two commas. If the sentence would make sense without that phrase, it is likely a nonessential clause and requires commas.

- Ex. T*he capital gain, or money they earn on their investment, could be a lot.*

Appositive phrases must have commas on both sides. An appositive phrase is a descriptor of the noun immediately preceding it, though on occasion it may occur at the beginning of a sentence if the noun is immediately following it. If it occurs at the beginning of a sentence, it still needs a comma before the noun to which it refers.

- Ex. *Teachers, the trusted educated individuals, are looked up to.*
- Ex. *Trusted educated individuals, teachers, are looked up to.*

Make sure to put a comma after a **dependent clause**. A dependent clause is a part of a sentence that cannot stand on its own, and it must be attached to an independent clause in order to make sense. In the example below "in order to play together nicely" is not a complete sentence on its own and must be part of a larger sentence in order to make sense.

- Ex. *In order to play together <u>nicely,</u> they must acknowledge these different preferences.*

Make sure to put a comma between two **independent clauses.**

- Ex. *Susan went to the <u>store, and</u> she saw what was on sale.*

If you start your sentences with an adverb or adverb phrase, you'll need a comma afterwards.

- Ex. *<u>Suddenly,</u> they appeared from the shadows*
- Ex. *<u>Angrily,</u> they began to yell*

If you start a sentence with an **interjection** like yeah, yes, hey, no, or oh, you'll need a comma afterwards.

- Ex. *<u>Yes,</u> that is a great idea.* **Or** *<u>Hey,</u> what are you doing?*

The **oxford comma** is requiring a comma before the word *and*. While it is still optional to some, we at Quabbin Quills require it when listing items of three or more.

- Ex. *I need milk, <u>eggs, and</u> cheese.*

Always put a comma between **city and state**.

- Ex. *I went to <u>Jacksonville, FL</u>.*

Dialogue/Quotations

When a character has an **internal monologue**, you can either use quotes or italics to represent their thought process, but not both.

- Ex. *Where is everyone?* Or "Where is everyone?" I thought.

Please use the American system of **putting punctuation inside quotes**, not outside them. If a sentence ends in quotations, punctuation still goes inside the quotes.

- Ex. "I hate olives<u>!"</u>
  - **not** "I hate olives<u>"!</u>

If two characters are having a conversation, you must start a new indented paragraph every time the speaker switches.

- Ex.
    - "I'm practically starving," said Hansel.

        "That's still no excuse for trying to eat my house," lectured the witch.

Conversation tags like s/he said go outside quotes. If the conversational tag is interrupting a quote, it should not be capitalized.

- Ex. "I was running," <u>he panted,</u> "and I saw this *thing* rise up from the lake."

If someone completes an action separately from speaking, that action should be its own sentence.

- Ex. "Then I tripped, and something scratched my leg." He winced and rubbed his calf.

When a character is quoting someone or something else, use single quotes within the larger statement.

- Ex. "This website says <u>'don't feed dogs chocolate,'</u> but I think carob is okay."

When a character is giving an uninterrupted speech or extended commentary that spans multiple paragraphs, apply quotations to the beginning of each new paragraph but do not use closing quotation marks until the character is completely finished speaking.

- Ex.

    "I used to be afraid of the water, but by the time I was thirteen I had faced my fear and had gotten over it. If only kids these days were as brave as I had been back in my day, we wouldn't have all the problems we have now.

    "Even politics was different back in my day—we used to call commies reds, and chase them out of town, but now every college student thinks they're a socialist. Not in my day, no sir. Times have certainly changed."

When a particular word is used for emphasis or to invoke criticism, it needs to be turned into **scare quotes,** which requires the word to be put around quotations.

- Ex. <u>"Cool"</u> can refer to temperature, or it can mean something is good.
- Ex. There are many <u>"investors"</u> who believe crypto is the future of finance.

Semicolons/Colons

Use a **colon** to present facts.

- *Ex. We must find the <u>following: rocks,</u> paper, and scissors.*
- *Ex. The news was made clear this <u>morning: evacuate</u> the island.*

Use a **semicolon** if you are listing items that have commas in them.

- *Ex.* We went to Austin, <u>Texas; Boston</u>, <u>Massachusetts; and</u> Boise, Idaho.

Use a **semicolon** to connect two complete sentences together. Often these are two sentences that need to be grouped together. Overall, this is a style choice and a period also works.

- Ex. *I would love to go shopping at the <u>mall; they</u> have the best sales.*

Dashes/Hyphens

When using **dashes**, please only use an **em dash** (—), not just a hyphen (-). When writing on Google Docs, you can click Insert, then select Special Character from the dropdown menu and search "em dash" in the search bar. This should give you an em dash to insert.
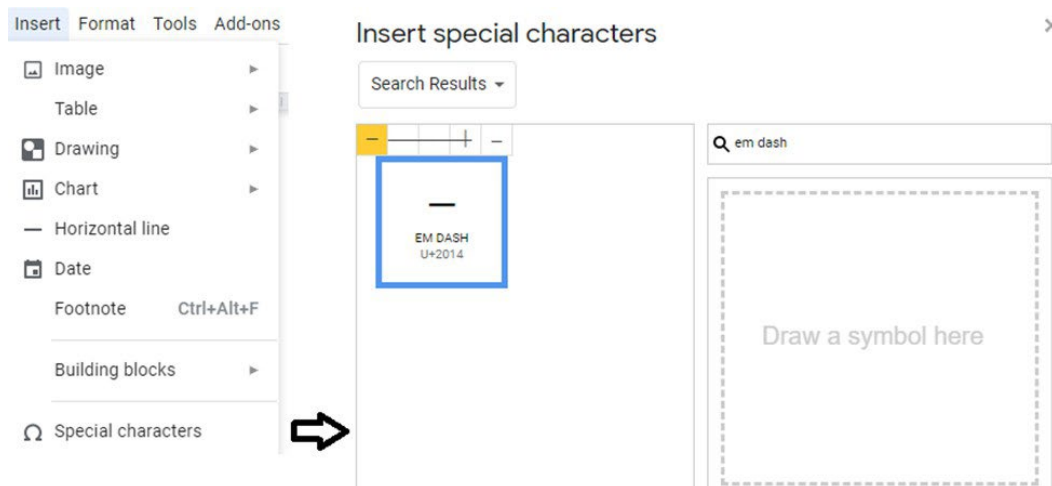
If your computer does not have an em dash function, as many PCs do not, you can also copy this one: —

If you are going to cut off a character's dialogue, use an em dash (–) rather than a hyphen (-)

- Ex. "But you said—"

Hyphenated words should have a hyphen, not an em dash, and should not be combined into one compound word or separated into two individual words.

- Ex. <u>ping-pong</u>, not ping—pong, ping pong or pingpong

Ellipsis

When dialogue trails off, please use an **ellipsis**. An em dash is used for abruptly cut off dialogue. On the other hand, an ellipsis is used for a slower, often more intentional and less interrupted end. You can make an ellipsis by typing three periods in a row. Your ellipsis should not have more or less than three periods.

- Ex. "It's not like anyone cares about grammar anyways…"

If there is continued dialogue between the ellipsis, make sure there is space on both sides.

- Ex. "I thought that … you were going to … nevermind."

Capitalization

 In prose pieces, all words at the beginning of sentences must be capitalized. Autocorrect should help you with this, but please make sure that you have not missed any capitalizations. This rule is not necessarily true for poetry submissions, but please make sure that your capitalization (or lack thereof) is intentional and adds to your piece.

All proper nouns must be capitalized. This includes specific places, people, and company names but does not include nonspecific nouns like "the store"

- Ex. Mia lives in <u>Chattanooga</u>, right between the <u>Walmart</u> and the pet store.

Do not capitalize for emphasis. If you want to emphasize a specific word please use italics instead.

- Ex. "She went back <u>*there*</u>, after everything that's happened?"
  - **not** "She went back <u>There</u>, after everything that's happened?"

Exclamations in all caps should be used sparingly. It is only in extreme situations that an exclamation merits all caps, so please do not overuse them. Capital letters connote loud volume and extreme emotion, usually negative. They can be distracting for the reader and make your story less readable if you use too many. Like italics, all caps emphasizes a specific word, but an entirely capitalized word means that it is being shouted. If you are not sure whether to use italics or all caps, use italics.

- Ex. "<u>*Ahhh*</u>!" he screamed, as the werewolf began eating his leg
  - **not** "<u>AAAHHHH</u>!" he screamed, as the werewolf began eating his leg.

Spelling/Italics

Please use standard **American English spelling** for your piece. Make sure that your spell check is set to *American English,* and this should avoid any spelling issues.

- Ex.
    - Color = American Spelling
    - Colour = British Spelling

If you are using a made-up word or name, please make sure that it is spelled consistently throughout.

When emphasizing one word/phrase, use italics

- Ex. "You ate *what*?"

If you are using foreign words that are not widely understood by the English-speaking population, put them in italics. Please make sure all foreign words are spelled correctly, as we cannot guarantee that we will catch misspellings of non-English words.

- Ex. Dad put a plate of fragrant *lussekatter* on the table.

If, when emphasizing a word, you feel it is necessary to add extra vowels, consider using italics instead. Inserting extra vowels is informal and often is out of place in literary or formal writing.

- "I'm *so* sorry"
    - **not** "I'm sooooooo sorry"

Nontraditional Conversations: Texting/Messaging

If you want to include a text conversation in your piece, you can format the conversation in either of the following ways:

Option A: (this requires each texter's name before every message they send. This format works well for group chats with three or more characters)

John: u up?

Merida: yea why

John: wanted to ask you something

Option B: (this involves formatting recipient's messages using Center Align, while the other texter's messages are formatted in Left Align, and requires that both texters were introduced beforehand)

u up?

<div align="center">yea why</div>

wanted to ask you something

Text conversations do not adhere to the normal rules of spelling, capitalization, or grammar. As texting is an informal medium with its own style, we do not expect you to sanitize or significantly alter it for inclusion in your story. However, please ensure that messages are comprehensible to the wider public and do not rely heavily on emojis or images to convey their meaning

While we do not forbid emojis, please remember that this is a literary magazine, and as such we are more interested in words than emojis. That said, if your characters are people that would use emojis, please feel free to let your protagonists express themselves in ways that are in character for them. We will not accept emojis outside of text conversations.

Numbers

As in MLA style, all numbers under 100 should be written out.

- Ex. Forty-five, Ninety-nine, 101, 237,

This is not necessary for numbers over 100 or for any numbers that appear in addresses.

- Ex. 34 Main St.

For dates, there should never be a possessive with an apostrophe. Instead, just add an *s* at the end

- Ex.
    - Incorrect: The 1900's resulted in two devastinging wars.
    - Correct: The <u>1900s</u> resulted in two devastinging wars.

Pronouns

In order to avoid **pronoun confusion**, make sure that the antecedent is clearly defined, or clarify what the pronoun represents.

- Ex. <u>My mom</u> is a great baker. <u>She</u> always made chocolate cake for my birthday. **Or** <u>My mom</u> always made chocolate cake for my birthday.

Avoiding pronoun confusion is especially important as our understanding of gender identity evolves. Like many other publishers and style manuels, we accept the use of "they" as a singular pronoun for nonbinary or genderqueer characters, provided that the author makes clear who "they" refers to.

- Ex. <u>Jo</u> just dyed <u>their</u> hair purple for prom.

Pay attention to how you use **subject (I) and object pronouns (me)**. Subject pronouns replace nouns that are performing actions (ie subjects), while object pronouns replace nouns that are receiving actions (ie objects).

- Ex. Tyler and <u>I</u> went to the store.
    - **not** Tyler and <u>me</u> went to the store.
- Ex. The manager gave Tyler and <u>me</u> a discount.
    - **not** The manager gave Tyler and <u>I</u> a discount.

To improve readability, it is sometimes a good idea to put a relative pronoun such as that or who in a sentence.

- Ex. Determining the specific condition <u>that</u> each client is dealing with is essential.

To Conclude

While our team of editors will look over your piece to provide feedback and final edits, please note that we expect submissions to adhere to our stylistic standards. Being familiar with and following our guidelines will help ensure that your piece is as clearly and cleanly written as it can be. Polishing your writing also helps ensure that your piece is as competitive and professional as possible by the time our editorial board is reviewing it.

We want your writing to be the best it can be, so please take the time to make edits before submitting. We wish you the best of luck and we look forward to reading your work!

Fusce a justo arcu

By Jane Doe

Fusce a justo arcu.
Cras aliquam purus ultricies sem congue, ac porttitor nibh iaculis.
Curabitur molestie arcu sit amet vestibulum rutrum.

Etiam dapibus tincidunt lorem,
non vulputate
dolor accumsan eu.

Pellentesque faucibus venenatis dolor,
ut fringilla lorem molestie a.

Aenean commodo sollicitudin turpis, sed sodales nisl tempus sit amet.
Sed quis
lectus vel
sapien aliquet iaculis.

Curabitur pretium euismod lorem,
non egestas ex sagittis vel.
In non mi quam.

Fusce
volutpat mi non vehicula efficitur.
Cras id dapibus erat.

Aenean pellentesque
magna posuere
ullamcorper gravida.

Etiam euismod rutrum malesuada.
Praesent hendrerit ligula at vehicula tincidunt.
Cras purus purus,
scelerisque ac vehicula ut,
suscipit eleifend nibh.

Sample Prose Submission (Your submission should be presented in this format):

Lorem Ipsum

By John Doe

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Quisque ullamcorper imperdiet risus eget pulvinar. Aliquam non purus sit amet arcu pretium mollis. Quisque maximus faucibus turpis, at consectetur quam suscipit id. Vestibulum placerat mollis augue ut venenatis. Sed ultricies dictum risus non congue. Donec a libero pulvinar, porttitor felis sed, luctus magna. Cras auctor convallis vehicula. Vestibulum sit amet enim vitae tortor finibus finibus. Cras non tortor quis est bibendum fringilla vel ac ipsum. Orci varius natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.

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"Cras lectus ex, interdum vitae nunc sagittis, mollis tempus lorem."

"Proin sed commodo lacus, at efficitur lacus."

In malesuada odio elit. Etiam libero diam, viverra sed eros quis, iaculis elementum arcu. Sed eleifend, sem at pulvinar interdum, lacus augue rutrum tortor, a tristique ipsum metus ac diam. Phasellus purus mauris, venenatis non vulputate non, ultrices eu turpis. Duis id sollicitudin arcu, et finibus ante. Nam blandit enim nec libero malesuada egestas. Nam ornare semper consectetur. Nullam posuere nulla convallis aliquet pretium. Curabitur ac lobortis tellus. Nam quis mauris vel justo pellentesque feugiat. Etiam at nisi justo.

Proin et ipsum viverra velit suscipit euismod. Fusce a justo arcu. Cras aliquam purus ultricies sem congue, ac porttitor nibh iaculis. Curabitur molestie arcu sit amet vestibulum rutrum. Etiam dapibus tincidunt lorem, non vulputate dolor accumsan eu. Pellentesque faucibus venenatis dolor, ut fringilla lorem molestie a. Aenean commodo sollicitudin turpis, sed sodales nisl tempus sit amet. Sed quis lectus vel sapien aliquet iaculis.