



*Ellipses  
consist of three  
periods with a  
space before each  
period and after  
the last one:*

*[ . . . ]*



KENT STATE  
UNIVERSITY

**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING  
CENTER**

KSU Writing Center  
318 Satterfield Hall  
Kent, Ohio 44240  
330-672-1787  
writing@kent.edu

You can find more mini-lessons online  
[http://dept.kent.edu/english/WritingCent/  
mini.htm](http://dept.kent.edu/english/WritingCent/mini.htm)

Revised Spring 2008

**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY  
WRITING CENTER**



*Ellipses*

**Phone: 330-672-1787**

**Mini-Lesson # 17**

**An ellipsis indicates that material has been omitted from an exact quote. Use brackets to show the ellipsis was not part of the original quote. (Do not use an ellipsis if the omitted material comes at the beginning of the quote.)**

The Declaration of Independence states: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another [...] a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation" (17).

**If a full sentence or more is omitted, add a period followed by an ellipsis in brackets. Complete sentences must precede and follow the ellipsis.**

In Mark Twain's autobiography, *Roughing It*, Twain pokes fun at his knowledge of horses: "I had never seen such wild, free, magnificent horsemanship outside of a circus as these picturesquely clad Mexicans, Californians, and Mexicanized Americans displayed in Carson streets everyday. [...] I had quickly learned to tell a horse from a cow, and was full of anxiety to learn more" (236-37).

**Do not end a quote with an ellipsis unless part of the final sentence of the quote is omitted.**

I like the humor Twain displays in the statement, "I had quickly learned to tell a horse from a cow . . ." (237).

**An ellipsis can also indicate a pause or hesitation in speech or an incomplete thought.**

The wounded soldier's final, whispered words were, "Tell Jenny I love . . ."

"I saw Susan in the mall on . . . I think it was Wednesday."

**If an ellipsis falls at the end of a poetry quote, use four periods, followed by the parenthetical reference.**

No man is an island, entire of itself;  
Every man is a piece of the continent,  
a part of the main.  
If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less,  
As well as if a promontory were,  
As well as if a manor of thy friends or  
of thine own were. . . . (1-5)

