



Brackets: Clarifying Text

Brackets are used in writing to clarify quoted text. Often a long quotation is edited down to a shorted one, but additional information is needed to understand the abbreviated version.

Example:

Full context: “No one knows for sure which is more important for longevity: nature or nurture; I believe the latter is more important for a long life,” said Dr. Phillips.

With brackets: Dr. Phillips said, “ I believe the latter [nurture] is more important for a long life.”

Rewrite each passage below into a single sentence. Add brackets to clarify important omitted information.

1. After talking with all of the members of the swim team, Principal Levinson said, “I am confident that they are the best team we’ve ever had.”
2. “We arrived in 1851 after a long journey across the Isthmus of Panama. That year saw a huge flood of gold seekers coming to California,” said the author.
3. “No longer willing to wait for the bustop, Charles left it to find a subway station.”
4. “IA fool and his money are soon parted. How long will it be before you are parted from it?” asked the banker.
5. “The Bulldogs and the Bears played football last night. It will be five years before they meet again on the football field.”



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With brackets: Dr. Phillips said, “ I believe the latter [nurture] is more important for a long life.”

Rewrite each passage below into a single sentence. Add brackets to clarify important omitted information.

Answers: Actual student answers will vary. Examples of correct answers:

1. After talking with all of the members of the swim team, Principal Levinson said, “I am confident that they are the best team we’ve ever had.”

Principal Levinson said, “I am confident that they [the swim team] are the best team we’ve ever had.”

2. “We arrived in 1851 after a long journey across the Isthmus of Panama. That year saw a huge flood of gold seekers coming to California,” said the author.

“That year [1851] saw a huge flood of gold seekers coming to California,” wrote the author.

3. “No longer willing to wait for the bustop, Charles left it to find a subway station.”

“Charles left it [the bus stop] to find a subway station.”

4. “IA fool and his money are soon parted. How long will it be before you are parted from it?” asked the banker.

“How long will it be before you are parted from it [your money]?” asked the banker.

5. “The Bulldogs and the Bears played football last night. It will be five years before they meet again on the football field.”

“It will be five years before they [the Bulldogs and the Bears] meet again on the football field.”