Plays in MLA Format: Block Quotes

Q: When do I use a block quote?
A: If you quote four complete lines of text or more, you must format it as a block quote!

The Main Rules:

- Transition from your paragraph into the block quote using a colon.
- Indent 1 inch from the left margin.
- Do not use quotation marks around block quoted text. (It’s in block quote format – we know it’s a quote.)
- Include the speaking character’s name in capital letters with a period at the end.
- Start a new line when a new character speaks.
- If a character’s dialogue continues onto a second line, indent the line an additional ¼ inch.
- The parenthetical citation goes on the last line of the block quoted text, outside any punctuation.

Plays in Prose

Example:
Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* opens with two guards discussing the uneventful, though chilly, night:

FRANCISCO. For this relief much thanks. ‘Tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO. Have you had a quiet guard?

FRANCISCO. Not a mouse stirring. (1.1.8-10)

Plays in Poetic Verse

- If there are any blank spaces that appear in the structure of the dialogue, try to duplicate them in your paper.

Example:
Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* opens with two guards discussing the uneventful, though chilly, night:

WILLY. The street is lined with cars. There’s not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don’t grow any more, you can’t raise a carrot in the back yard. They should’ve had a law against apartment houses. Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there? When I and Biff hung the swing between them? (Miller 1.926)