When a quote ends with a parenthetical citation, place the period after the parentheses.

According to Myers interpretation of the Declaration of Independence, no one should question the meaning of the expression, "all men are created equal" (17).

If the quote ends with a question mark or exclamation point, leave it in quotes, and follow the parentheses with a period.

Example:

Myers asks, "Why should we question the expression 'all men are created equal?'" (17).

Note: A common error made in using quotation marks is the omission of the second set of marks in the pair. Check all your quotes for beginning and ending quotation marks.

For more information on using quotation marks, see The Everyday Writer, 3rd edition, Section 3e (pages 337-342).
Semicolons and colons go outside quotation marks.

Examples:
In an essay about the Declaration of Independence, students discussed the expression "all men are created equal"; therefore, Helen wrote a feminist interpretation of "men."

According to the Declaration of Independence, "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed": the people.

Question marks, exclamation points, and dashes go inside or outside quotation marks, depending on their use in the sentence. (If they apply only to the material in quotes, place them inside the quotation marks. If they apply to the entire sentence, place them outside the quotation marks.)

Examples:
What did you write on the test about the statement, "[A]ll men are created equal"?
Helen began her essay with the question, "Why are only 'men' created equal?"

Single quotation marks are only used within double quotation marks.

Examples:
Mary's essay focused on the question, "Why do we insist that 'all men' refers only to males, not humans?"

Mary quoted Myers who asks, "Why should we question the expression 'all men are created equal'?” (17).

(In the second quotation, note the placement of the single quotation mark before the double one.)