

The Ellipsis to Show a Pause

An ellipsis is a series of three dots (. . .). While it often shows that some text has been left out, it may also be used to show a pause, a hesitation, or an incomplete thought, especially in quotations. Note there is a space before and after the ellipsis. If the ellipsis is at the end of a quotation followed by a speaker reference, there is no comma.

Example 1:

“I’m confused . . .” said Elaine.

Example 2:

The painting was . . . curious.

If the ellipsis comes at the end of a sentence, the ellipsis is followed by a space and a period.

Example 3:

She cried “Hello”

Rewrite each sentence below using an ellipsis.

1. I thought the party was nice.
2. Otto said, “There’s nothing inside.”
3. The dog looked at the large cat and then looked away.
4. “I want,” Stacy said, dreamily.
5. “No, no, no, no!” exclaimed Horace.
6. The flower arrangement was unusual.

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"I'm confused . . ." said Elaine.

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The painting was . . . curious.

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Example 3:
She cried "Hello"

Rewrite each sentence below using an ellipsis.

Answers: Student's answers will vary. Examples of correct answers:

1. I thought the party was nice.

I thought the party was . . . nice.

2. Otto said, "There's nothing inside."

Otto said, "There's nothing inside. . . ."

3. The dog looked at the large cat and then looked away.

The dog looked at the large cat . . . and then looked away.

4. "I want," Stacy said, dreamily.

"I want . . ." Stacy said, dreamily.

5. "No, no, no, no!" exclaimed Horace.

"No . . . no . . .no. . .no!" exclaimed Horace.

6. The flower arrangement was unusual.

The flower arrangement was . . . unusual.