1. Focus

**Explain Words in Quotation Marks**

*Say:* We know that quotation marks are used to show dialogue, or words that people say, and to show material quoted from a source. Quotation marks can also be used to call attention to words that an author is using in an unusual or special way.

**Model Using Words in Quotation Marks**

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources, and read it aloud to students.

1. Her brain neurons had formed billions of “superhighway” connections.
2. Her “plastic” brain was able to grow and change over time.

**Modeling Text**

After sentence 1. *Say:* The word *superhighway* is enclosed in quotation marks, so I know the author is using this word in a special way. I know what a superhighway is—a highway with many lanes and lots of traffic driving fast. But the author doesn’t literally mean that the woman’s neurons had turned into highways. The author is using the word *superhighway* to create an image in my mind that helps explain the concept of pathways in the brain—many different ones that carry many signals at high speed. The quotation marks let me know that I need to think about what the author means in using this word.

After sentence 2. *Say:* In the next sentence, the word *plastic* is in quotation marks. I know what plastic is, but I don’t think the author is using the most common meaning of this word. The author means that the brain can be molded or changed, just as plastic can be melted and made into different shapes. Writers of informational texts use quotation marks in this way to call out words or phrases that might be unfamiliar or confusing so that readers will pay attention and understand the writer’s meaning.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Words in Quotations

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to form pairs. Invite pairs to discuss why the writer used quotation marks in each sentence. (Students do not need to copy sentences.)

1. Readers who are “hooked” will want to find out how this man has been able to recover.
2. Eating a “rainbow” of foods, such as blueberries, cherries, and green vegetables, is good for your brain.
3. To build new neural pathways, we need to do “sit-ups” with our brains.

Share Sentences with Words in Quotations

Invite pairs to share their results. Discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:
• What is special or unusual about the way the word is used?
• Why do you think the writer chose to use this word?
• What other words could fit in the quotation marks?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember that if you use words in a special or unusual way in your writing, enclose them in quotation marks. This will identify for readers of your informational writing words and phrases that they may need to pay extra attention to in order to understand your meaning.

If you would like to give students additional practice using words in quotations, have them complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their answers to BLM 9. Use students’ answers to provide corrective feedback.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
The concept of words in quotation marks is too complex for beginning ELs. Concentrate on the more common uses of quotation marks, such as in dialogue. Write simple sentences of dialogue on chart paper and model where to place quotation marks. Point out tags such as he said and she replied that signal dialogue. Then invite students to add quotation marks to the sentences.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to discuss the practice sentences. Provide the following sentence frames to help students state their ideas:

The use of this word is unusual because ______.
The author chose to use this word because ______.

All Levels
If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: special/especial.