

Punctuating Dialogue

Never make a mistake again



Quotation Marks

- “Fred, I want you to take that new truck back to the dealership,” Mary snarled, “right now!”
- “No way will you get me to,” Fred paused, “ return that truck.”

Only the words spoken are surrounded by quotation marks.



Keep commas and periods inside the quotation marks

- “ I do not know,” yelled Albert.
- Albert yelled, “I do not know.”

Which one is correct?

- The teacher screamed, “Everyone needs to line up at the door”.
- The teacher screamed, “Everyone needs to line up at the door.”



An uninterrupted speech needs quotation marks only at the beginning and the end.

■ “My mother was right. I never should have married you. You only ever think of yourself and I’m always the one who has to suffer.”

■ “Oh cry me a river.” ” I’m the one who came out on the losing end of this marriage!” “Why didn’t you listen to your mother?”

Which one is correct?



Start a new paragraph each time the speaker changes.

- “You can be so cruel some times!”
Mary wailed.
- “Oh I suppose you’ll go crying to your mother now,” Fred sighed.
- “At least she understands me,”
sobbed Mary.



When only two people are talking you do not have to keep using their names.

■ “I understand how you feel, alright?”

■ “You do?”

■ “Aw, you know I do.”

■ “And do you care about me?”

■ “Of course I do.”

■ “So you’ll take the truck back?”

■ “Over my dead body!”



Quote inside of a quote

- Use single quotation marks for quotes within quotes.
- This also includes publications that are set off by quotes.
- Example: He said, "Danea said, 'Do not treat me that way.'"
- Example: "Everyone will read the short story entitled 'The Escape' for tomorrow," said the substitute teacher.



Exclamations and Questions

- An exclamation point or question mark is placed inside the quotation marks when it punctuates the quotation. It is placed outside when it punctuates the main sentence.
- For example:
 - I almost fell over when he asked, “That won’t be a problem for you, will it?”
 - Did the teacher really say, “Finish by tomorrow”?



Exclamations and Questions

- When using exclamations and questions in your dialogue be sure to properly punctuate the words following the marks. If the sentence continues and the following words are not proper nouns then you **DO NOT** capitalize the next word.
- For example:
 - “Did you hear Mr. Marcoux?” **a**sks Steve.
 - “Watch out!” **w**arned John.
 - “No homework tonight!” **M**rs. Tomao asserted.