

Dialogue Rules

When you want to write the exact words that a person speaks, you must use quotation marks. When you write quotations, you must follow certain rules.

1. Use quotation marks before and after a person's exact words.

"Look out for Allison," warned Lindsey.
John said, "I have found a pot of gold."

2. Use a comma to divide the spoken words from the speaker.

George cried out, "But I don't like spinach!"

3. When a person's exact words are interrupted by other words in the sentence, use quotation marks only around the person's words.

"When class begins," announced Mrs. Eller, "we will check our math work."

4. Capitalize the first word in the quotation, even if it is not the first word in the sentence.

Kim inquired, "Have you seen my pencil?"

5. Do not use a comma to separate the quotation marks from the speaker if the quotation ends in a question mark or exclamation point.

"Are you looking for us?" the girls asked.
"I have found the lost boys!" Lauren shouted.

6. Place periods, question marks, commas, and exclamation marks inside the quotation marks.

"Help!" cried Spencer and Robert.
Mike asked, "Where is your red folder?"

7. Whenever you quote a NEW speaker, indent so that you start a new paragraph.

Liza said, "Let's play kickball at recess. I know a new rule we can follow that will make the game more fun."
"Sounds great!" said Stephanie.