

Punctuating Dialogue

1. **Direct quotations:** Use quotation marks at the beginning and at the ending of direct quotations. They are not used with indirect quotations.

A. Lee said, "I enjoy horror movies." (direct quote)

B. Lee said that he enjoys horror movies. (indirect quote)

2. **Explanatory words at the beginning of the sentence:** Explanatory words are followed by a comma before the quotation marks. At the end of the sentence the period is placed inside the quotation marks.

Bonnie said, "The tide is going out."

3. **Explanatory words at the end of the sentence:** The quotation at the beginning of the sentence is followed by a comma inside the quotation marks. A period follows the explanatory words at the end of the sentence.

"The tide is going out," said Bonnie.

4. **Divided Quotations (explanatory words in the middle)-** In divided quotations, each part of the quotation is in quotation marks. The second part of the quotation starts with lower case letters unless it begins a new sentence or is a proper noun.

"In that case," said Rita, "we will help you."

"The window is stuck," said Rita. "It is painted shut."

5. **Place exclamation and question marks inside the quotation marks if they are part of the quotation.** Place them outside the quotation marks if they do not belong to the quotation itself.

Jan asked, "Is there a phone book here?"

Did he say, "I am not accepting donations"?

6. **To signal a quotation within a quotation, use single quotes:**

"Have you ever read Shirley Jackson's, 'The Lottery'?" he questioned.

7. **Make sure that every time a new person speaks, you start a new paragraph and indent it.**

"Hello, John," whispered Sarah as her friend entered the library.

"Sarah, it is good to see you," replied John. "If you need any help with your work, please feel free to ask me."

"Thanks," Sarah said with a smile.