

Rules for Punctuating Dialogue

RULE #1: A direct quotation begins with a capital letter.

Jimmy shouted, "See you at the game!"
"Is it true?" asked Cindy.

RULE #2: When a quotation is interrupted into two parts with words like "he asked" or "the teacher demanded," the second part begins with a lower case letter.

"What are some of the things," Mrs. Baskin inquired, "that make school so much fun?"
"One thing I like," replied Sarah, "is recess!"

RULE #3: When writing dialogue, all punctuation marks at the end of the quotation go inside the quotation marks.

"Let's visit the museum," suggested Samantha.
Jon replied, "Didn't we go there last weekend?"
"But when we did," Beth added, "we didn't see the Ancient Egyptian exhibit."

RULE #4: Do not put a period at the end of a quotation followed by things like *she said, mom asked, he explained, etc.* Use commas, question marks, and exclamation marks but not periods. Periods end sentences.

"My Algebra class is driving me crazy!" Paul yelled.
"That's my favorite class," Becky replied.

RULE #5: Make a new paragraph (indent) when a different person begins to speak.

"Last night, I dreamt that I ate a giant marshmallow," Kevin said.
"Was that anything like the dream you had about eating your way through a mountain of fruit cocktail?" asked Suzy.
"Scarier," Kevin explained. "This time I woke up and my pillow was gone."

OTHER REMINDERS:

- Always make it clear who is speaking in the dialogue.
- Try to avoid using the word "said" repeatedly.