

Dialogue Rules

1. Begin a new paragraph with each new speaker.

Mike mentioned, "I told my mom that I wanted to get a new bike."

"Why do you need to get a new bike?" replied John. "You got a new bike last year."

2. Narration related to the dialogue can be grouped in the same sentence/paragraph.

Walking down the street talking, Suzy let her friends know, "The basketball game will be at 5:00."

3. Put quotation marks around direct quotations.

"We will be having steak and mashed potatoes for dinner," Mom announced.

4. Consecutive lines/sentences of dialogue can be enclosed in one set of quotations unless the dialogue is interrupted by narration or the speaker changes.

"My brother doesn't like steak and mashed potatoes. He would rather have his in the form of a burger and fries," James remarked.

5. Put punctuation inside the closing quotation marks.

"Regardless, the meal will start at six," Mother responded.

6. Use a comma to set off narration if it is within the same sentence as the dialogue.

During the movie she whispered, "I don't know if I will be able to sleep tonight. This movie might give me nightmares."

7. Begin a quotation with a capital letter unless it is a split quotation.

"Try to watch some television," I suggested, "in order to get your mind off it."

8. Make sure punctuation is placed with the appropriate part of the sentence. If the dialogue is a question but the sentence is not, put the question mark with the dialogue.

Follow the same rule for an exclamation.

"Do you want to go to the movies next week and see a comedy?" she asked, trying to comfort him.