

# Dialogue

- Place the exact words a person says in quotation marks.
- Begin a new paragraph (indent) when the speaker changes.
- Write the sentences of a direct quotation like regular sentences.
- When a direct quotation comes at the beginning of a sentence, remember the following rules:
  - Separate it from the dialogue tag with a comma, unless it's a question or exclamation.
  - Place the comma, question mark, or exclamation point inside the closing quotation marks.
  - Don't capitalize the first word in a dialogue tag, unless it's a proper noun or the pronoun *I*.
- When a direct quotation comes at the end of a sentence, place an end mark, such as a period, question mark, or exclamation point, inside the closing quotation marks.
- When a dialogue tag interrupts a one-sentence quotation, place the speaker's exact words before and after the tag in quotation marks, use commas to separate the tag, and do not capitalize the first word in the second part of the quoted sentence.
- If a quotation has more than one sentence, place opening quotation marks before the first sentence and closing quotation marks after the last sentence that is spoken.
- Keep dialogue tags simple—*said* is often enough.
- Balance dialogue with some action to advance the plot and provide insight into characters—show rather than tell.
- Be selective and include only the important parts of a conversation.