



A dog howled, ~~braeking~~ the
stillness. Someone was behind me...

breaking (with arrow pointing to the crossed-out word)
comma (with arrow pointing to the comma)

ellipsis (with arrow pointing to the ellipsis)
period (with arrow pointing to the period)

Speech Punctuation



‘**Direct speech**’ refers to the written version of the exact words that a person or character speaks out loud.

To write direct speech you must use sets of quotation marks.

“ ”

Quotation marks surround the words of direct speech to show that those words are different from the rest of the writing.



What might happen if no quotation marks were used to separate direct speech from the rest of a text?

Where do punctuation marks go?

End punctuation marks (**periods**, **question marks** and **exclamation points**) usually fall *within* the sets of quotation marks.

For example:

“Be quiet at once!” the teacher shouted angrily.

“Should we play some soccer after school?” Martin asked.

Stacey said, “I can’t believe Vicky did that.”



Punctuating direct speech

To use direct speech that is introduced with non-spoken text, you need to use a **comma** before the speech, and then enclose it in quotation marks.

David turned to Victoria and said, “Will you marry me?”

If the direct speech forms a complete sentence, it must start with a capital letter and finish with a period, question mark or exclamation point – *inside* the quotation marks.



Write, and correctly punctuate, two sentences which introduce direct speech with non-spoken text.

Punctuating direct speech

If the direct speech is a complete sentence that is broken up by non-spoken text, the first part of the speech ends with a comma (inside the quotation marks).

Notice that a comma is used before the second part of the direct speech.

“If you’re not too busy,” Jenny asked hesitantly, “could you take the dog for a walk?”



The second part of the speech starts in lower case.

Where do the quotation marks go?



Punctuating direct speech

If the direct speech after the non-spoken text is a new, complete sentence, then it should begin with a **capital letter**.

“I don’t know what I want to do when I grow up,” said Kyran. “**T**here are just too many choices. I might decide later.”

Even though this is the end of the first part of Kyran’s speech, a comma and not a period goes here. This is because the speech is contained within a complete sentence which includes the phrase ‘said Kyran.’



You can have many complete sentences within one set of quotation marks – see how Kyran’s speech changes.

Practice punctuating direct speech



Paragraphing direct speech

When you are writing direct speech you must start a new **paragraph** every time the speaker changes.

A good way of remembering to do this is to think of each speaker as having his or her own paragraph.

“What movie do you want to see?” asked Danny, hoping Alexis would not say some girly movie.

“How about *Transformers*?” she replied, much to Danny’s delight.

Notice that the text that continues after the second quotation mark starts with a lower case letter.

Notice that the end punctuation marks are *inside* the quotation marks.



Speech punctuation rules

