

## Punctuating Dialogue

1. **Quotation marks** show where the EXACT words of a speaker begin and end.

“Mark, did you see that?” she whispered. (direct quotation)

She asked Mark if he heard that. (indirect quotation)

2. A **comma** separates the quotation from the words that tell who is speaking. A **question mark** or **exclamation point** takes the place of a comma.

“Stop whispering,” I almost shouted back.

“Stop whispering!” I shouted back.

3. **Some quotations are divided.**

a) If a divided quotation is one sentence, use commas to separate the quotation from the speaker. Don't capitalize the second part of the sentence.

“If you look,” she exclaimed, “you can see the shadow over there.”

b) If a divided quotation is **two sentences**, use a period after the words that tell who is speaking. Capitalize the first word of the second sentence.

“See that shadow over there?” she exclaimed, pointing to a dark corner of the room.  
“Don't you see it?”

4. When you quote a conversation, begin a **new paragraph** each time the speaker changes. Remember to keep the words that describe who is speaking in the same paragraph.

“Mark, did you see that?” she whispered, her eyes wide with fear. She took two steps backward and bumped into an easy chair.

I looked at her and said, “Lisa, you are always seeing things. I have no idea what you are talking about.”

5. Remember to **capitalize the first word** of a quotation – it is a sentence inside a sentence.

She whispered to Mark, “Did you see that?”