

Punctuating Dialogue

(examples from Harry Potter series)

1. All talking needs to be surrounded by quotation marks ("").

"Go to your cupboard - I mean, your bedroom," he wheezed at Harry.

2. Instead of using a period at the end of the speech, use a comma, if you are going to tell who is talking.

"Las' time I saw you, you was only a baby," said the giant. "Yeh look a lot like yer dad, but yeh've got yer mum's eyes."

3. If you use a question mark, you don't need to change to a comma.

"What do they think they're doing, keeping a thing like that locked up in a school?" said Ron finally. "If any dog needs exercise, that one does."

4. If you use an exclamation mark, you don't need to change to a comma.

"A stone that makes gold and stops you ever dying!" said Harry. "No wonder Snape's after it! *Anyone* would want it."

5. If you have interrupted speech, to let the reader know who is speaking, a comma is needed before the break, and after the speaker's name.

"Professor," Harry gasped, "your bird - I couldn't do anything - he just caught fire -"

6. If someone is *thinking* about something, but doesn't say it out loud, you can either use quotation marks or not. Either way is acceptable.

Of course, he thought bitterly, Uncle Vernon was talking about the stupid dinner party.

or

"Of course," he thought bitterly, "Uncle Vernon was talking about the stupid dinner party."

Formatting:

- Make sure to **indent at the beginning of each quote** (person talking).
- **Skip to the next line** when one person is finished speaking and another person begins to speak.
- Follow the correct way to punctuate (see above).
- Use your **"Words Instead of Said"** on the back of this sheet to help you find alternatives ways to say "said."

Words Instead of Said

accused	conversed	hollered	questioned	squawked
added	cooed	hooted	quipped	squeaked
admitted	copied	howled	quoted	squealed
advised	corrected	humbled	raged	stammered
agreed	coughed	hummed	rapped	started
announced	countered	hyped	raved	stated
answered	cracked	implied	read	stormed
argued	cried	indicated	reassured	stuttered
articulated	cringed	informed	recalled	suggested
asked	croaked	inquired	recollected	swore
assured	cursed	insinuated	recommended	talked
babbled	debated	insisted	recounted	tattled
barked	decided	interjected	rehearsed	taught
bawled	declared	interrupted	rejected	taunted
begged	delivered	jabbed	related	teased
belched	demanded	jeered	relayed	tempted
bellowed	denied	jested	remanded	thought
belted	denounced	joked	remarked	threatened
blamed	disclosed	joshed	reminded	thundered
blared out	drawled	lamented	repeated	told
bluffed	droned	laughed	replied	translated
blurted	echoed	lied	reported	triumphed
boasted	encouraged	listed	reprimanded	unloaded
booed	enumerated	maintained	requested	urged
bosser	enunciated	mentioned	responded	uttered
bragged	erupted	moaned	retold revealed	vocalized
breathed	estimated	mocked	roared	voiced
broadcasted	exaggerated	moped	rumbled	volunteered
cackled	exclaimed	mouthed	rumored	voted
called	explained	mumbled	sang	waited
cautioned	exploded	murmured	scolded	warned
challenged	exposed	muttered	scorned	welcomed
chanted	expressed	named	screamed	wept
chattered	figured	nodded	screeched	wheezed
cheered	flirted	nudged	shouted	whimpered
chimed in	fussed	offered	shrieked	whined
chirped	gabbed	ordered	shrugged	whispered
choked	gagged	panicked	shushed	whistled
chorused	gaspd	panted	sighed	wondered
chuckled	giggled	pipd	silenced	yakked
claimed	gossiped	pleaded	smirked	yapped
clamored	greeted	pledged	soloed	yawned
coached	griped	pointed out	snapped	yelled
coaxed	groaned	pondered	sneered	yelped
comforted	growled	praised	sneezed	yipped
commanded	grumbled	preached	snickered	yodeled
communicated	grumped	pretended	snorted	
complained	grunted	proclaimed	sobbed	
complimented	guessed	promised	speculated	
confessed	gulped	pronounced	spit out	
congratulated	gurgled	protested	spoke	
considered	hinted	put in	spouted	
continued	hissed	quarreled	sputtered	