

Mastering Speech Marks with Max the Mathematician

Learning objective: To correctly identify and apply inverted commas (speech marks) to punctuate direct speech in Year 5 writing.

Read each flashcard carefully. On the front, you will find a rule or a challenge. Use your knowledge of SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) to identify the correct placement of speech marks.

What is the primary purpose of inverted commas?

Inverted commas are used to show exactly what a character has said, marking the beginning and the end of direct speech.

Where should the capital letter go when starting a piece of direct speech?

The first word inside the inverted commas must always begin with a capital letter, even if it is in the middle of a sentence.

Max said, 'I have solved the puzzle.' Where is the punctuation mark placed?

The full stop (or other terminal punctuation) must be placed inside the closing inverted commas.

If the reporting clause comes before the speech, what punctuation is needed before the opening mark?

A comma is required to separate the reporting clause from the direct speech (e.g., Max said, '...').

How do you punctuate speech if the reporting clause comes after the quote?

Use a comma inside the closing speech marks instead of a full stop, followed by a lowercase letter for the reporting clause (e.g., 'Hello,' said Max).

True or False: You must start a new line every time a new speaker begins to talk.

True. This is a standard rule of narrative writing to help the reader follow the dialogue.

Explain why we use a reporting clause in a narrative.

A reporting clause tells the reader who is speaking and can provide context about how they are speaking (e.g., whispered, shouted, pondered).

What punctuation mark should be used if the speech is a question?

A question mark should be placed inside the inverted commas (e.g., 'Have you finished the sum?' asked Max).

Compare and contrast: How does punctuation change if the speech is an exclamation?

An exclamation mark is used inside the inverted commas instead of a comma or full stop to show strong emotion or surprise.

Max the monkey is confused. Why is this incorrect: 'I love maths' said Max.

It is missing a comma after 'maths' to separate the speech from the reporting clause.

Rewrite this correctly: MAX SHOUTED LOOK AT THE PATTERN

Max shouted, 'Look at the pattern!'

Justify why writers should avoid overusing the word 'said' in their reporting clauses.

Using synonyms like 'muttered', 'exclaimed', or 'enquired' adds detail, develops characterisation, and creates a more engaging atmosphere for the reader.