

Mastering the Art of Speech: A Guide to Inverted Commas

Unlock the secrets of dialogue and let your characters find their voice!

- Inverted commas must always wrap around the spoken words, like a protective hug. Place them at the very beginning and the very end of the dialogue.
- Always include a piece of punctuation—such as a comma, question mark, or exclamation mark—inside the closing inverted comma before the reporting clause.
- When a new speaker begins to talk, you must start a new paragraph. This helps the reader identify exactly who is saying what.
- The reporting clause tells us who is speaking (e.g., 'said Max' or 'whispered Pip'). If it follows the speech, use a comma inside the speech marks.
- Capitalise the first letter of the speech if it is a full sentence, even if it appears in the middle of a larger sentence.

Did you know? Did you know? In the 16th century, writers didn't use speech marks at all! Dialogue was often written in the same font or style as the rest of the text, making it quite a challenge for the reader to track who was speaking. Thankfully, modern punctuation helps us navigate conversations with ease.

Key vocabulary: Inverted commas · Direct speech · Reporting clause · Punctuation · Dialogue · Opening · Closing