

Mastering Punctuation: The Art of Direct Speech

Learning objective: To accurately use inverted commas (speech marks) to demarcate direct speech, ensuring correct punctuation inside the speech marks and appropriate reporting clauses.

Read each task carefully. Remember that speech marks must enclose exactly what is said, and a comma, question mark, or exclamation mark must separate the speech from the reporting clause.

Max the monkey sat in the canopy, staring at his maths puzzle. Pip the caterpillar crawled over to investigate. 'I think the answer is forty-two,' Pip whispered gently. Max shook his head and replied, 'That cannot be right because the total must be an even number.'

Word bank: inverted commas · reporting clause · dialogue · punctuation · capital letter · demarcate

1. Rewrite the following sentence by adding the missing inverted commas and the correct punctuation: Leo the lion roared loudly stay away from the river bank. (2 marks)

2. Explain why it is necessary to start a new line every time a different character speaks in a piece of narrative writing. (2 marks)

3. Convert this indirect statement into direct speech using a reporting clause at the end: Nova asked if the stars were visible tonight. (2 marks)

4. Identify the error in this sentence and rewrite it correctly: 'I love exploring the ocean,' said Finn the dolphin, 'the water is so clear today'. (2 marks)

5. Compare and contrast the function of a comma and a full stop when used inside inverted commas. Justify why we use a comma when the reporting clause follows the speech. (3 marks)

6. What might happen to the reader's understanding of a story if an author chose to omit inverted commas entirely? Provide an example to support your view. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene where Zara the zebra and Kit the fox are having an intense debate about a pattern they found in the forest. Include a speech bubble for each character, but write their dialogue below the drawing using correctly punctuated inverted commas.



Extension challenge: Write a short, engaging dialogue (between 100-150 words) between Ellie the elephant and Bea the honeybee as they discuss the history of the meadow. You must include at least one example of speech before the reporting clause and one example of a reporting clause before the speech.