

Mastering Speech Marks with Max the Monkey

Learning objective: To correctly use and punctuate direct speech using inverted commas (speech marks) according to Year 6 grammar standards.

Read each flashcard carefully. The front shows a rule or example, and the back explains how to use speech marks correctly. Max the Monkey is here to help you solve the puzzle of where the punctuation goes!

What is the primary purpose of inverted commas?

Inverted commas (or speech marks) are used to show the exact words spoken by a character or person.

Where should the capital letter go when starting direct speech?

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

Punctuate this sentence: Max said I love solving maths puzzles.

Max said, "I love solving maths puzzles."

Where does the final punctuation (full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark) go in a sentence of speech?

The final punctuation must go inside the closing inverted commas.

What is a 'reporting clause'?

A reporting clause tells us who is speaking (e.g., 'Max shouted' or 'Pip whispered').

Punctuate this sentence: Can we go to the library asked Pip.

"Can we go to the library?" asked Pip.

Where do you place the comma if the reporting clause comes before the speech?

You place the comma immediately after the reporting clause and before the opening inverted comma.

How do you punctuate speech if the reporting clause is in the middle?

Use a comma inside the first set of inverted commas, then a comma after the reporting clause before continuing with the speech.

Punctuate this: It is a beautiful day said Nova.

"It is a beautiful day," said Nova.

True or False: You need a new set of inverted commas every time a new person speaks.

True. Every time the speaker changes, you must start a new paragraph and use a new set of inverted commas.

Fix this sentence: "I am hungry" said the bear.

"I am hungry," said the bear. (A comma is needed inside the speech marks before the reporting clause).

Why do we use a comma before closing speech marks when the reporting clause follows?

Because the comma replaces the full stop that would normally end the sentence, linking the speech to the reporting clause.