

DIALOGUE

Dialogue is the typographic representation of conversation between characters/speakers/subjects.

TYPOGRAPHIC ORIENTATION

Dialogue-based paragraph orientation may take the conventional paragraph's content and break the individual lines into individual paragraphs (showing one speaker delivering words then another delivering words). Indentations and the separation of lines are used to show who is speaking first, second, and so forth. The lines are consistently broken to welcome the next speaker.

Use the TAB button to indent a new line of speech.

[Tab] Mary looked perplexed with the math problem. However, Jim knew that she could solve the equation.

[Tab] "What do you think you need to solve the problem?" asked Jim. Mary concentrated desperately to decide what kind of construction might be warranted in such a situation. She thought that the quadratic formula might work, but she was completely unsure.

[Tab] "Well, I may need to use the quadratic formula," she replied.

[Tab] "Well, then do it," he insisted. At this point, Jim was slightly anxious about whether or not his tutoring methods were working. He thought for a second that some tough love might be needed to prompt Mary to finish the problem, but then he realized that she was just a beginner. She needed to be approached gently and with positive affirmations.

[Tab] Just then, she completed the problem and raised herself up from the table and proclaimed, "I did it."

[Tab] "You did... I told you that you could do it, Mary!" Jim remarked.

Note: The details and context surrounding the character/speaker/subject may be added to the line to produce a much longer individual paragraph (as seen in the last paragraph/lines of this exchange/conversation).

SIGNAL PHRASES

Signal phrases are short introductory sentences which help to inform the reader that quoted material appears. Usually, they consist of a subject and a reporting verb, and they may be found in the beginning or towards the end of a quote.

[Tab] Lori asks: "How is your day going?"

[Tab] Greg responses, "Fantastic! I hope it stays this way."

[Tab] "Just stay positive," noted a gentleman walking between them.

Note: Be aware of the placement of the comma (and colon) before and/or after the quotation marks.

"HANGING" QUOTES

Oftentimes, if the "speaker" of the line is understood and easily identified, a signal phrase is not often needed. However, for most quotes, signal phrases help to elucidate and/or clarify who is speaking, which makes them indispensable.

[Tab] "I play the guitar," said Linus.

[Tab] "Linus, everyone plays the guitar nowadays," said Rachel.

[Tab] "Well, but, I think that I'm better than everyone else." [Hanging Quote]

[Tab] "Okay, Linus! Whatever you say." Rachel scoffed as she walked away.

Notice how the third line of this set does not contain a signal phrase, because the speaker is easily identified as "Linus" who is replying to Rachel.

PUNCTUATING QUOTES

Typically, a comma is used after a signal phrase.

[Tab] Alexis claimed, "I don't like hot dogs."

Conversely, a comma is put inside the quotation marks if the quote ends with a signal phrase.

[Tab] "I don't like hot dogs," Alexis claimed.

TREATMENT OF PRONOUNS FOLLOWING DIALOGUE

If you need to end with the signal phrase, remember that the punctuation always goes inside the quote. Additionally, a "non-action" phrase (or regular signal phrase) which follows this phrasing typically begins with a lower case letter.

[Tab] "What are we eating for dinner?" she asked.

[Tab] "We are having hot dogs," he replied.

[Tab] "Hot dogs! Again! Ew, David!" she lamented.

If an action (rather than a simple signal phrase) follows the quote/dialogue, then you may use capitalization of the pronoun.

[Tab] "I am not having hot dogs, David!" She threw the dish of hot dogs to the floor.
(action)

[Tab] "Okay! Fine! I won't make hot dogs ever again," he said. (simple signal phrase)

An optional stylistic approach: You may put a comma in the middle of a sentence (after the signal phrase) when two quotes or two parts of a quote are used.

[Tab] "I lived with two girls, and all they ever had in the refrigerator were pizzas and hot dogs," Alexis claimed, "so no more hot dogs, David."

INTERNAL MONOLOGUE

If the character is speaking to themselves, quotation marks are not required.

Additionally, italics may be used (or not).

Example:

Okay. She doesn't like hot dogs. What are we going to eat at the barbecue? David thought.

-or-

Okay. She doesn't like hot dogs. What are we going to eat at the barbecue? David thought.