

Punctuation

Inverted commas, or quotation/speech marks, are used for: dialogue, quotations, titles, extra emphasis.

1 Punctuating speech or conversation

Like the bubble in a cartoon, inverted commas/speech marks wrap round the speech and any punctuation that belongs to it.

Here are three models:

- He said, "Do you know how to punctuate speech?"
comma to break off *capital letter to start speech*
punctuation inside speech marks
- "We are working on it," they replied.
comma to break off, then speech marks
small letter as sentence isn't over
- "You seem," he said, "to have grasped it now. Well done."
small letter *comma to break off*
small letter to continue speech
close speech marks only when speech has finished

Apart from this, all you need to remember is:

- a new paragraph every time the speaker changes
- no speech marks if the speech is reported:
 He said (that) he would see us later.

2 Punctuating Titles

- Use inverted commas (quotation marks) to enclose the titles of articles, television show episodes, chapters, short stories, short poems, and songs.
- Underline (or use italics on a computer) the titles of longer works such as long poems, books/novels, newspapers, plays, television and radio series, and movies (newspapers).
- Have you read the article "Lightning, Nature's High-Voltage Spectacle" in the July 1993 edition of National Geographic?