

Grammar 7

Can I develop my understanding of speech punctuation?

- I have opened and closed my speech marks in the correct place;
- I have included punctuation within speech marks;
- I have used a new line for a new speaker;
- I have used a range of synonyms for 'said'.

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Look at the piece of speech below. With your learning partner, discuss how you could improve it and what you would change. Be prepared to justify your ideas during class discussion.

I need everyone to stand back said the fireman. Please help said Mrs Smith my cut is still in the house. Don't worry madam, we'll soon have this fire under control said the fireman. Thank you said Mrs Smith.

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“I need everyone to stand back!” the fireman ordered.

“Please help,” begged Mrs Smith. “My cat is still in the house.”

“Don’t worry madam, we’ll soon have this fire under control,” the fireman replied.

“Thank you,” said Mrs Smith.”

This piece of speech has been improved by following the Three golden rules for dialogue:

- 1) You must open AND close speech marks;
- 2) You need to include a piece of punctuation before you close your speech marks;
- 3) New speaker = new line

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One thing that people often forget is include punctuation
Before you close your speech marks.

Use a . if it's the end of the sentence.

Use a , if you're carrying the sentence on.

Use a ? If someone is asking something.

Use a ! If someone is shouting or yelling.

“ Do you know what time it is?” asked the train driver.

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Using a new line every time there is a new speaker helps to organise your writing. It also lets the reader know when a different character starts talking. With your learning partner, decide when and why we need to use a new line in this piece of dialogue between two characters.

“Come on, we’re going to be late,” Sidney called from the top of the stairs. “Stop moaning,” replied Dave. “I’m not moaning, I just don’t want to be late that’s all,” Sidney said, his voice full of frustration. “We’ll be fine,” Dave responded, “just stop worrying.” “How can you say that?” Sidney asked.

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There are 3 way in which to present speech.

Before

Michael said, "I'm not sure about this."

After

"I'm not sure about this," said Michael

Split Speech

"I'm not sure about this, said Michael. "I think we should just turn around."