Punctuation marks must separate the dialogue from the dialogue tag.

A) If the tag is first, use a comma to separate. End the quote with the correct punctuation INSIDE the quotation marks (period, exclamation point, or question mark).

- Bob said, “Go outside.”
- Bob yelled, “Go outside!”
- Bob asked, “Did you go outside?”

B) If the dialogue is first, use a comma for statements, question marks for questions, and exclamation points for exclamations. Then, end them all with a period.

- “Go outside,” Bob said.
- “Go outside!” Bob yelled.
- “Did you go outside?” Bob asked.

Capitalization

Always capitalize the first letter of dialogue inside quotation marks.

- Bob said, “Go outside.”
- “Go outside,” Bob said.

Tags after dialogue always start with a lowercase letter.

...even if there was a question mark or exclamation point ending the dialogue

Only exception: Names are always capitalized (no matter what!)

- “Go outside,” said Bob.
- “Go outside!” yelled Bob.
- “Did you go outside?” asked Bob.

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Thank you for purchasing my Basic Dialogue Rules: handout notes or poster. Sometimes a good, clear set of notes with easily understandable examples is all a student needs to be able to practice a concept. I created these as a regular reference that can be posted on the wall or kept in a student’s binder or writing folder. Please look back at my Teachers Pay Teachers store in the future for more great free and affordable classroom resources. *This product works alone, but was created as a part of my product called “Dialogue Punctuating Hands-On Activity.”*

Happy Teaching,
Jessica Osborne

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