

Basic Quotation Mark Rules

1. *Use double quotation marks to set off a direct (word-for-word) quotation.*

Correct: "I hope you will be here," he said.

Incorrect: He said that he "hoped I would be there." (The quotation marks are incorrect because hoped I would be there does not state the speaker's exact words.)

Johnny said have a nice day.

It's too cold to play outside whined Betty Sue.

2. *Always capitalize the first word in a complete quotation, even mid-sentence.*

Lamarr said, "The case is far from over, and we will win."

Charlotte exclaimed that's way too many pieces of toast!

Eloise whispered my tomato plants are diseased.

3. *Do not capitalize quoted material that continues a sentence.*

Lamarr said that the case was "far from over" and that "we will win."

Jason muttered I'll get you and then he added and your little dog too.

4. *Use commas to introduce or interrupt direct quotations.*

He said, "I don't care."

"Why," I asked, "don't you care?"

If you come closer she whispered I'll tell you a secret

Don't come closer he whispered because you forgot to shower today.

This rule is optional with one-word quotations.

He said "Stop."

5. *If the quotation comes before a tag, such as he said, she wrote, they reported, Dana insisted, end the quoted material with a comma, even if it is only one word.*

"I don't care," he said.

"Stop," he said.

I love that book too agreed Billy Bob.

No way she grumbled.

6. *Periods and commas ALWAYS go inside quotation marks.*

The sign said, "Walk." Then it said, "Don't Walk," then, "Walk," all within thirty seconds.

He yelled, "Hurry up."

The sergeant ordered left then right then left then about face.

- 7. The placement of question marks with quotation marks follows logic. If a question is within the quoted material, a question mark should be placed inside the quotation marks.*

She asked, "Will you still be my friend?"

The question Will you still be my friend? is part of the quotation.

Do you agree with the saying, "All's fair in love and war"?

The question Do you agree with the saying? is outside the quotation.

Can I have a bit of your sandwich asked Joey.

Did Joey say I need some hot dogs.

- 8. If a quoted question ends in mid-sentence, the question mark replaces a comma.*

Will you still be my friend?" she asked.

Can I go too asked Louise.

- 9. Use single quotation marks for quotations within quotations.*

Dan said: "In a town outside Brisbane, I saw 'Tourists go home' written on a wall. But then someone told me, 'Pay it no mind, lad.' "

Note that the period goes inside both the single and double quotation marks.

Bambi said hey Dad, Mom said don't go in the clearing.

Sleepy said Grumpy Snow White just said dinner time

- 10. Quotation marks are often used with technical terms, terms used in an unusual way, or other expressions that vary from standard usage.*

It's an oil-extraction method known as "fracking."

He did some "experimenting" in his college days.

I had a visit from my "friend" the tax man.

<https://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/quotes.asp>