

# DIALOGUE/MONOLOGUE

## Punctuation/paragraphing:

- Dialogue belongs in quotation marks. Single quotes are only for quotes within quotes.
- Everytime there is a new speaker, you start a new paragraph.
- Punctuation belongs inside quotation marks.
- Monologue is not in quotes. Instead, it is italicized to indicate internal thought.
- Don't be afraid to play with punctuation to create tone.

RULE:	WRONG:	RIGHT:
Use a comma before the speaker tag.	"I love you." she said.	"I love you," she said.
Speaker tags are still part of the sentence and do not need to be capitalized.	"What are you doing?" He asked.	"What are you doing?" he asked.
Use commas to insert a speaker tag into the middle of a sentence.	"As you may know" he said "I just got out of jail."	"As you may know," he said, "I just got out of jail."

## Tips for writing realistic dialogue:

- People speak in contractions and use slang/informal language when they talk. Your dialogue should reflect this. Don't make your dialogue sound like an academic essay. Strike a balance though -- no one talks in all slang or jargon either.
- People don't say each other's names very often when they are addressing each other. Don't make your characters frequently spit out the other person's name.
- People don't usually speak in huge blocks of text when they are having a conversation. Make your dialogue short and to the point.
- People don't describe their actions as they are doing them. That's what narration is for.
- People do occasionally use filler words, such as "like," "umm," and a few others. Sprinkle these in as appropriate, but don't overdo them. Think of how insufferable it is to listen to someone who says "like" a lot. Reading it a lot is even worse.

## Bad examples:

Mom, would it be ok for me to have a little bit of dessert after I finish my dinner?  
Yes, Erin, when you finish all of the broccoli on your plate, you can have a little bit of dessert.  
Thanks mother, but what will I be allowed to have?  
You can have one of those cookies with the chocolate in the middle if that sounds good to you.  
Oh yes, mother, thank you. I like those cookies very much.

Lovely weather we are having, isn't it?  
Oh my, the cold is just too much. I am ready for spring.  
Yes, spring is what I am ready for as well.  
Spring is my favorite time of year.  
It is my favorite time of year too.

## Here are some more realistic examples:

"Can you believe we have four classes after two hours of testing?! TWO HOURS!"  
"Yah, it sucks."  
"It more than sucks. I'm exhausted. Stayed up until 2."  
"Doing what?" *I'm sure it was something lame.*  
"Scrolling...nothing fun."  
"Do you ever do anything fun?"  
"Haha... says the person who will never go to parties with me."  
"Can't help it if I'm always grounded -- blame my mom."

"Hey Mrs. O'Janpa, my grade right now is like almost a B. Can you round it?"  
"Uhhhh... let me take a look. My computer is so slow." *I need to close a thousand tabs.*  
"My mom won't let me get my driver's license unless my grades are good."  
"Well, I see here you are missing your poetry assignment." *It was due over a week ago, bro.*  
"I will do it during advisory. If I do, can you put the grade in right away?"  
"I'll do what I can. Just get it in!"  
"Thanks."

## NOW YOU TRY! SCROLL TO NEXT PAGE!

Pick one of these scenarios and write a dialogue for it. Your dialogue should be at least 8 lines.

1. Asking parental permission for something
2. A conversation with your teacher about your grade.
3. Interaction between coach and athlete.
4. A friend complaining to another friend.