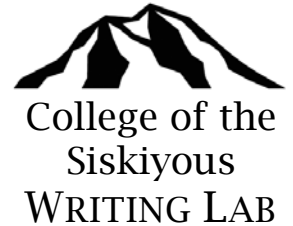


USING DIALOGUE



INTRODUCTION: Dialogue can help bring your characters to life. Use these guidelines to add dialogue to your narratives, creative writing, and short stories.

Guidelines

1. The best way to learn dialogue is to study well-written passages in literary fiction.
2. Make sure the reader knows who is speaking.
3. A new paragraph begins with each change of speaker (description or actions of the speaker may be included in the same paragraph).
4. Each speech, even if only a single word, is usually a paragraph by itself.
5. Attributives [tags] are placed in the same paragraph as the speech.
6. Place attributives at normal breaks in speech.
7. Read your passage aloud to find the breaks.

(adapted from *The Elements of Style*)

Punctuating Dialogue

1. Enclose the quoted words in quotation marks.
2. Begin a new paragraph each time a new speaker is introduced.
3. When quoting several paragraphs of dialogue by one speaker, begin each new paragraph with quotation marks, but use closing quotation marks only at the end of the entire quoted passage—not at the end of each paragraph.
4. Commas and periods are always placed inside the quotation marks. Question marks, dashes, ellipses, and exclamation points are also, if they are part of the quote.
5. Avoid colons and semicolons in dialogue. If you simply must use them, they are placed outside of the quotation marks.

(adapted from *The Holt Handbook*)

Punctuation of Attributives [Tags]

1. If the tag interrupts a complete sentence (i.e., it falls in the middle of the sentence), use a pair of commas to set it off:

“In the future,” Orville said, “we will fly.”

2. Tag between sentences:

“In the future, we will fly,” he said again. “It will be wonderful.”

3. Tag at the beginning:

Mirabel queried, “We will fly?”

4. If the tag is a complete sentence, use a colon:

She shook her head: “No, we will never fly.”

5. Tag at the end:

“We will never fly,” she repeated.

6. With alternative end punctuation (i.e., question marks and exclamation points), the tag remains in lower case:

“Is it so bad to dream?” he asked.

“Yes, it is!” she yelled.

(adapted from *The Holt Handbook*)