

High Intermediate 1
Unit 8: Punctuation Note
Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur

Use of Quotation Marks
To Report Direct Speech

Whenever we are reporting what someone exactly said, we should use quotation marks to set off that person's words from the rest of sentence. In other words, we use quotation marks when we deal with direct speech to encapsulate someone's exact words.

The following examples show how double quotation marks are used to enclose the exact words spoken by someone. In each example, the quoted speech is presented inside the quotation marks, and this can be done in two main ways:

Dialogue Tag at the End:

The sentence starts with the quoted speech, and the dialogue tag (he replied, the scientist explained, etc.) comes at the end. The quoted speech is enclosed in double quotation marks, followed by a comma inside the quotation marks, then the dialogue tag.

Examples:

“Time flies when you're having fun,” he replied.

“This discovery could change the way we understand the universe,” the scientist explained.

“Are you coming to the party tonight?” John asked.

“Yes, I'll be there around 8 PM,” Mary responded.

“I can't believe it's already September,” she said.

“We need to act now to save the environment,” the activist urged.

Dialogue Tag at the Beginning:

The sentence begins with the dialogue tag, followed by a comma, and then the quoted speech enclosed in double quotation marks.

Examples:

He replied, “Time flies when you're having fun.”

The scientist explained, “This discovery could change the way we understand the universe.”

John asked, “Are you coming to the party tonight?”

Mary responded, “Yes, I'll be there around 8 PM.”

She said, “I can't believe it's already September.”

The activist urged, “We need to act now to save the environment.”

This usage helps to clearly distinguish the spoken words from the narrative text.

Point:

Punctuation marks such as periods, commas, question marks and exclamation points are placed inside the quotation marks not outside them.

Point:

The first word of the quoted sentence is capitalized.

Point:

We use double quotation marks (“ ”) to enclose the exact words of a speaker in American English, but we use single quotation marks (‘ ’) in British English.

Examples:

“I’m going to the store,” she said. **American English**

‘I’m going to the store,’ she said. **British English**

Interrupted Quotations (Split Quotations):

An interrupted quotation occurs when a speaker's quoted words are broken up by a phrase that provides additional information, such as who is speaking. This can help make the dialogue more dynamic and natural. Here's how it works:

1) Quoted speech begins:

The first part of the quote is enclosed in quotation marks.

2) Interruption by a dialogue tag:

A phrase like "he said" or "she replied" interrupts the quote. This phrase is set off by commas.

3) Continuation of the quoted speech:

The quotation resumes, enclosed in quotation marks again.

Here are some examples:

“I can’t believe it,” she said, “that we won the game!”

“I think,” she said, “we should leave now.”

“When you finish your homework,” he instructed, “you can watch TV.”

“This is an amazing discovery,” the scientist exclaimed, “that will change everything!”

“When we get to the park,” he explained, “we can have a picnic and play some games.”

The main points to remember:

- Place commas inside the quotation marks for the first part of the quote.
- Resume the quotation with a lowercase letter unless it's the start of a new sentence.

Nested Quotations:

A quotation within another quotation is known as a nested quotation. It happens when you need to include a quote inside another quote. To differentiate between the two levels of quotation, different types of quotation marks are used.

Here's how it works:

- Use double quotation marks for the outer quote.
- Use single quotation marks for the inner quote (the nested quote).

Here are some examples:

Sarah said, "He told me, 'I'll be there by 5 PM.'"

In this case, Sarah is quoting someone else.

"Did she really say, 'I'll think about it'?" John asked.

John is quoting someone else's words within his question.

More Examples:

"When I asked her about the project, she said, 'It's going well,'" he recounted.

"He told me, 'You should read the book titled "The Great Adventure,"' and I did," she said.

Source:

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