**Rules for Formatting and Punctuating Dialogue**

1. Indent for each new speaker. If you are writing a conversation, you should indent each time the speaker changes.

**Example:**

**“Kevin, go play in the backyard, okay?” Gwen pleaded.**

**“But my computer!” Kevin squeaked.**

**“Your computer is fine. Leave the men alone. They’ll be done soon.”**

2. Only the **exact words** of the speaker go inside quotation marks.

3. The words used to identify the speaker are called the tagline (for example:, Mary said or Jane replied). Words like said, replied, screamed, etc. are never capitalized in a tag line. Try to vary your tag lines so that you don’t use “said” again and again! Also, think about adverbs that tell how someone said something.

4. There are three types of tag lines - Follow the models on the other side of this paper.

**Dialogue Models to Mimic!**

**If the tag comes before the quote**: the comma always follows the tag line and the beginning letter of the quote is always capitalized.

**Example: Jon asked, “Where did everyone go?”**

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**If the tag comes after the quote**: the ending punctuation after the actual quote (before the tag line) can never be a period. If the sentence would normally end with a period, substitute a comma.

**Example: “Everyone decided to go,” said Jon**

Exceptions to this rule are question marks or exclamation points.

**Examples: “Where did everyone go?” asked Jon.**

**“I cannot wait until my birthday!” Emily shrieked.**

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**If the tag comes in the middle of the quote:**

If the tag comes into between two separate sentences, then a period follows the tag line and the second sentence starts with a capital letter.

**Example: “I have a dog,” said Jane. “Do you have any pets?”**

When the tag splits one sentence into part parts, a comma follows the first part of the quote and another comma follows the tag line.

**Example: “I have two dogs,” said Jane, “that fight all**

**the time.”**