Writing Essays
Dialogue in Narrative Essays

There are two types of dialogue:

- direct and indirect

Direct dialogue is speech using the character’s exact words. In this case, quotation marks are used.

Indirect dialogue is a second-hand report of something that was said or written but NOT the exact words in their original form.

In this lesson, you will focus more on the writing of direct dialogue.

There are some rules to follow when writing direct dialogue in your narratives:

Rule #1: Use quotation marks to indicate the words that are spoken by the characters.
Example:
- “Help me!” exclaimed the little girl.

Rule #2: Always begin a new paragraph when the speaker changes.
Example:
- “I am coming home,” Sue announced. “I am really tired and can’t work anymore.”
  “Okay, I think you should do that,” her husband agreed.

Rule #3: Make sure the reader knows who is doing the talking.

Rule #4: Use correct punctuation marks and capitalization.
Example:
- “May I buy a new pair of shoes?” Lauren asked her mom.

Note that the quotation marks are outside the end punctuation of the quote; the rest of the sentence has its own end punctuation.

If the quote is not a question or exclamation, use a comma and not a period before the second quotation marks.
- “I bought a new jacket yesterday,” Tammy said.