

Using inverted commas

Notice that the speech itself is enclosed in **inverted commas** and there is always a single punctuation mark *before* they are closed. This is usually a comma unless it is the end of a sentence when it is, of course, a full stop. If a question is asked, a question mark is used. A new paragraph is always started at the beginning of the sentence which contains the speech.

‘Cathy’s accepted the invitation,’ said Ruth.

‘Why did you invite her?’ asked Brian.

‘I invited her because Lydia asked me to.’

Brian laughed and remarked, ‘I’m glad she’s coming. I always liked her.’

Ruth mocked, ‘You were taken in by her.’

If a question mark is used, it replaces the comma as in the second sentence. In the fourth paragraph notice that the speech does *not* begin the sentence and there are words *before* the inverted commas are open. The first word of a person’s speech always begins with a capital letter.

Interrupting direct speech

Sometimes a character’s speech will be interrupted by ‘she said’ or something similar and in this case a new paragraph is not started because the same person is speaking:

‘I don’t know how you can be so calm,’ she said. ‘I am very upset.’

There is a full stop after ‘said’ because the first sentence had been completed. If it had not been completed, the