

12. QUOTATION MARKS

How would you punctuate the following sentences to show that Jake and Shirley are speaking?

1. Jake said I wish I had a purple canary.
2. When are you going to Alaska? Shirley asked.

If you added quotation marks to these sentences, then you have the right idea. Here is how they should look:

1. Jake said, "I wish I had a purple canary."
2. "When are you going to Alaska?" Shirley asked.

Definition

Quotation marks are used to indicate the exact words a person is saying—a quote. The words they enclose, or set off, are a **direct quotation**.

Quotation marks come in pairs; it is important that you remember to place one at the beginning and one at the end of a quotation. If a direct quotation is interrupted, and the sentence includes words that are *not* the exact words a person is saying, you will need to use two sets of quotation marks:

1. "I don't know," she said, "who you think you are."
2. "Please be quiet," Tip pleaded, "so that I can hear myself think."

INDIRECT QUOTATIONS

Sometimes a sentence will report what a person said without using that person's exact words. This type of sentence is called an **indirect quotation**. Quotation marks are *not* used to enclose indirect quotations:

- 1a. Juanita asked Tony to go to the prom with her. (*indirect*)
 - b. Juanita asked, "Will you go to the prom with me, Tony?" (*direct*)
- 2a. Herman announced that he didn't feel well. (*indirect*)
 - b. "I don't feel well," Herman announced. (*direct*)

PLACEMENT OF PUNCTUATION

Use a comma to set off a direct quotation from the rest of the sentence:

1. Gordon said, "I wasn't here yesterday."
2. "I love circuses," Zachary explained.

Always put commas and periods inside the final quotation mark. Place question marks and exclamation points inside the final quotation mark too, *unless* they are *not* part of the actual quotation:

1. "I'm over here," Patricia said.
2. Bill said, "I like to read history books."
3. Gretta asked, "When can I use the car?"
4. "Don't touch that shark!" Bubba screamed.
5. Why did Joanna say, "I believe in equal rights for everyone"? (The question mark is *not* part of the direct quotation, so it goes *outside* the final quotation mark.)

TITLES

In addition to direct quotations, quotation marks are also used to enclose the titles of short stories, short poems, paintings, songs, articles, speeches, chapters, and essays:

"The Lottery" (story) "Olympia" (painting)
"The Gettysburg Address" (speech) "A Modest Proposal" (essay)

Certain kinds of titles do *not* get enclosed with quotation marks, however. The titles of books, newspapers, magazines, movies, and television shows are underlined instead:

Chicago Tribune (newspaper) Newsweek (magazine)
Little Women (book) Titanic (movie)

QUOTATION MARKS EXERCISES

A. *Directions:* Insert quotation marks where they are needed in the following sentences. Insert all other punctuation as needed, too. If a sentence is correct already, write a C after it.

EXAMPLE: "That's my hat," said Ralph. ____

1. What did you bring me from Mexico Alice asked. ____
2. Ernie heard someone say in the silence There goes the ball game.

3. Jose said, See you later, and then walked home. _____
4. June said that she had a stomach ache after eating two pizzas.

5. Bring me the hammer from the basement, please his mother said.

6. I was surprised when the dog said Fetch me a bone. _____
7. The man said Trust me and winked at Max. _____
8. The girl asked me what we were eating for dinner. _____
9. You won't be sorry if you vote for me the politician promised.

10. She smiled and answered Of course I like country music. _____

B. *Directions:* Rewrite the following indirect quotations as direct quotations and insert quotation marks where they are needed.

EXAMPLE: Jim said he liked Al's hat.

"I like your hat," Jim said to Al.

1. Leroy said that a huge blizzard is on the way.

2. Mr. Wiggins told me that I'd better get out of the road.

3. That strange boy asked me what time it is.

4. Jane said she is going to India for a month.

5. I said that I had never seen a purple cat before.

6. The manager asked Frank when he intended to start working.

C. *Directions:* The following sentences contain a variety of titles. Following the rules for titles, either enclose these in quotation marks or underline them.

EXAMPLE: Sue played a song called "Freight Train."

1. The Washington Post is one of the best newspapers in the world.
2. One of Sarah's favorite poems is Nothing Gold Can Stay, by Robert Frost.
3. Jack London wrote a story called To Build a Fire.
4. War and Peace is a very long novel.
5. You're the Top is a Cole Porter song.
6. Humphrey Bogart starred in a movie called Casablanca.
7. Stuart read an article entitled How to Double Your Savings in a Day.
8. Sunflowers is one of Van Gogh's most famous paintings.
9. The name of the chapter is The River Bank.
10. I read about her in Harpers magazine.

D. *Directions:* Write a short conversation between two people and insert quotation marks where they are needed.
