

Punctuating Speech

3rd Grade

Where the quotation marks go, and the comma nearly everyone forgets.

Everything the person actually says goes inside the speech marks, including the punctuation that belongs to it.

"Words spoken," said Sam.

Speech first

Comma inside the marks, then lower-case said.

"I'm ready," said Ada.

Speech last

Comma before the marks open; full stop inside.

Ada said, "I'm ready."

A question

Question mark replaces the comma, still inside.

"Are you ready?" asked Ada.

New speaker

Every time the speaker changes, take a new line.

start a new line

THE COMMON MISTAKE

× **"I'm ready". said Ada.**

✓ **"I'm ready," said Ada.**

The mark belongs to the speech, so it goes inside — and it is a comma, not a full stop.

New speaker, new line. It is what makes a conversation readable.