**PUNCTUATING DIALOGUE**

**We** [**punctuate dialogue**](http://www.fictionfactor.com/guests/dialoguebasics.html) **to help** [**guide the reader**](http://www.be-a-better-writer.com/punctuate-dialogue.html) **through a story.**

* **Who is speaking?**
* **Where does it start?  Where does it end?**
* **What kind of emotion**

1)  Place quotation marks at the beginning and end of specific dialogue.

              **"**Why did you go to the market?**"**

2)  Capitalize the first letter of all dialogue.

(There is only one rare exception where we do not.)

               **"Why** did you go to the market?**"**

3)  Add dialogue tags to clarify who is speaking.

               **"**Why did you go to the market?**" Paula said.**

4)  At the end of a quotation, use a comma in place of a period.

(If the quotation ends with an exclamation point (!) or a question mark (?), use that punctuation instead.)

               "I wanted to buy oranges for my fruit salad**,**" John said.

5)  Start a new paragraph when a different character speaks.

               **"**Why did you go to the market**?"** Paula said.

               "I wanted to buy oranges for my fruit salad**,**" John said.

6)  When a character speaks in paragraphs, do not close the end of a paragraph with a quotation mark if it is not the end of the quotation.

(However, do begin the next paragraph with an open quotation mark.)