Punctuating Quotations

What are quotations used for?

To designate which words were said by someone other than the author.

Quoting spoken or written words

Use quotation marks when you report what someone said or when you use words taken from a written source:

- The woman shouted, "Look what I found!
- "Don't go in there at night," the man warned.
- According to Smith, "On average, women's hearing is slightly better than men's."
- "Did you see anyone in the store?" the officer asked.

Quotation marks with the names of articles or short stories

Use quotation marks for the name of an article in a newspaper or magazine, or for the name of a chapter or short story in a book:

- I read "Illiteracy in Our Nation," an article in *Time* magazine.
- My favorite short story in *Sudden Fiction International* is "The Elephant."

Punctuation Guidelines for Quotations:

Use a comma with an expression such as *he said:*

- "Try the shop next door," he suggested.
- "Don't open your eyes," May said, "until I tell you."

A period or comma at the end of a quotation goes inside the quotation marks:

- The author tells us that "email has changed the social dynamics of many offices."
- "We're having a surprise party for Sally," he whispered.

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With punctuation other than a period or a comma, put the punctuation mark inside or outside of the quotation marks, depending on whether it is part of the original quote. Notice that if you use a question mark or exclamation point at the end of a quote, you do not use a comma there:

- "Did I run a stop sign?" asked the driver.

- "Twenty pushups!" ordered the sergeant.

- I can't believe that he said "It doesn't matter anymore"!

- Did that sign say "deer crossing"?

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