

Quotation Marks and Paragraph Breaks

15j. When you write dialogue (a conversation), begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes.

EXAMPLES “After lunch,” said Mrs. Ochoa, “we will read the end of the story.” The tale, growing more mysterious every day, had captivated the class.

“Will it have a happy ending?” asked Grace. The room was silent, and all eyes gazed intently at the teacher. No one moved, but somebody’s pencil rolled onto the floor.

“You will have to wait to find out,” Mrs. Ochoa replied.

EXERCISE In the following dialogue, insert paragraph symbols (¶) wherever a new paragraph should begin.

Example Stanislav exclaimed, “I’ll take Swiss cheese anytime.” ¶ “Is that your favorite cheese?” asked Jeanne.

As he wrote on the chalkboard, Mr. Kaplan asked, “Does anyone know what causes the holes in Swiss cheese?” “I know the answer!” exclaimed Stanislav. “It’s the gas bubbles.” “How did you know that?” asked Mr. Kaplan. “My grandfather makes cheese,” answered Stanislav. “I’ve watched him many times. He adds bacteria for flavor, and adding bacteria makes gas bubbles.” “What happens next?” Alicia wanted to know. “When the cheese gets hard, the bubbles remain as the holes we see in Swiss cheese,” added Stanislav. “I never knew that,” said Jeanne. “I wish I hadn’t learned it,” whispered Alicia, “because that process doesn’t sound very appetizing to me.” “What do you mean? I think it’s interesting,” Jeanne told her, “and it doesn’t change the fact that Swiss cheese tastes good.” “I agree,” Stanislav said. Nodding his head, Mr. Kaplan looked at Stanislav and told him, “Thanks for sharing your story with the class.”

Quotation Marks in Dialogue

15j. When you write dialogue (a conversation), begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes.

EXAMPLES “I wish I could attend the ball,” said Cinderella.
 “Sorry, my dear. You must stay home and finish your chores,” replied her stepmother.
 “It seems that I’m the only one working around here,” Cinderella complained.

15k. When a quotation consists of several sentences, put quotation marks only at the beginning and the end of the whole quotation.

EXAMPLE ““Everybody knows this is totally unfair! But if I finish quickly, maybe I’ll have a chance to go. Who knows? I might even dance with the prince.””

15l. Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.

EXAMPLE ““Did she say ‘dance with the prince’?”” one of the sisters asked.

EXERCISE Insert any quotation marks that are needed in each of the following sentences. When the speaker changes, draw a paragraph symbol (¶) to show where any new paragraphs should begin.

Examples Ramona asked, “Why do you have that odd look on your face, Whitney?”

¶ “Yeah, I was wondering that, too,” said Christopher.

Looking slowly around the room, Whitney stopped and said, Listen! Did you hear a noise? No, I didn’t hear anything. Do you think you might be imagining things? Ramona answered quietly. I’m worried, Christopher whispered. I heard a strange noise, too. Maybe someone is standing on the back porch! exclaimed Whitney. Let me check the back door, said Christopher in an unsure tone. I’ll go with you, volunteered Whitney. Shaking her head, Ramona said, Oh, you two. Nobody’s standing outside on the porch. Let’s just stay where we are. Christopher teased, Are you afraid to stay in here by yourself? No, silly! she answered. You’re the one who said I’m worried. You know, Whitney replied, our cat does walk around on the porch in the evenings. Now that I think about it, he sometimes makes sounds exactly like the one we just heard.