

Rules of Dialogue

1. Always use speech marks around the spoken words. E.g. "Hello."
2. Always use a capital letter at the beginning of the dialogue. E.g. "Hello."
3. Always put punctuation inside the speech marks. E.g. "Hello."
4. Always begin a new line for a new speaker.
E.g. "Hello Rachel."
"Hi Sam, how are you?"
"Fine and you?"
5. Make it clear who is speaking. E.g. "Hi, how are you?" asked Rachel.
6. If the words after the dialogue explain who is speaking, use a , ? or ! before the speech marks and lower case letters after the speech marks : asked Sarah. ✓ Asked Sarah. ✗
E.g. "I'm going," said Sam. Or: Sam said, "I'm going."
"Hey, watch it!" shouted Paul.
"Are you coming?" asked Sean.
"I'm going home," replied Paul, "after I've finished this."
"Are you coming?" He walked away without turning around. (Why like this?)
Or if it is clear who is speaking then put the . ? or ! inside the speech marks.
E.g. "I'm going."
"Hey, watch it!"
"Are you coming?"

Remember to keep checking your work.

This is a difficult set of rules to learn and it might take you a while to get it! Don't worry if you don't get it immediately, 'practise makes perfect'!

You can remind yourself of the rules by reading novels and focusing on the dialogue in them.