Rules for Punctuating Dialogue

1. Keep punctuation *inside* the quotation marks.

**Examples**

"Hello," said Mr. Regan. "How are you?"

"I would like to go to the beach this weekend," she told him as they left the apartment.

"I don't want any stupid cake," says the guy who goes to Europe and the Middle East. "Where are the cookies?” he says, and laughs.

2. When a tag line interrupts a sentence, it should be set off by commas. The first letter of the second half of the sentence is in lower case.

**Example:**

"That is," Wesley said, "that neither you nor me is her boy..."

3. To signal a quotation within a quotation, use single quotes.

**Example:**

"Have you read 'Hills Like White Elephants' yet?" he asked her.

4. Start a new paragraph for a new speaker or narration.

* (Narration means a change in action- every time there is a change in action, it must be a new indented line! That is why the narrative has short paragraphs. It is not an essay!)

**Example:**

"Hello," said John. "How are you?"

"Can't complain," said Eleanor. "Well, I could, but nobody listens to a word I say.”

"I'm just on my way to the coffee shop. Want to join me?”

"I'd love to, John, but I'm already running late."

**\*NOTE: Your reader knows that the two other lines are still John and Eleanor because no new speaker was introduced. Once you introduce a new speaker, a new dialogue tag is needed.**

5. Use dashes and ellipses correctly:

**Ellipses** indicate a character's words are trailing off....

***Example:***

"The reason I wanted to talk to you, Frank, is to ask you..."

**Dashes** indicate that a character was cut off or interrupted

***Example:***

"The reason I wanted to talk to you, Frank, is to ask you-"

"Yeah, well I don't want to talk to you."