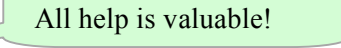
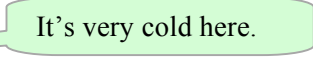


How to

...use inverted commas for speech

When a sentence contains words that a person speaks, we use inverted commas, also known as speech marks, to show which words these are:

- The supervisor said, 'All help is valuable!' 
- 'It's very cold here,' complained Marcus. 



The words in inverted commas are referred to as **direct speech**. There are several points to notice about the punctuation of sentences containing direct speech. These are listed in the rules box below.

Try this!

Read the rules. Insert inverted commas into the following sentences, using separating commas, full stops and capital letters where necessary.

- 1 John said we are all ready to go
- 2 The fireman shouted to the staff get out of there
- 3 Check the toy cupboard regularly and remove any toys that are broken said Sarah
- 4 The noise was incredible laughed Robert
- 5 The assistant replied I'm sorry but the photocopier isn't working at the moment
- 6 Report any accidents immediately said the supervisor

RULES

- 1 A **comma** separates the direct speech from the rest of the sentence.
- 2 Direct speech begins with a capital letter, even though it follows a comma.
- 3 Put exclamation marks, question marks and separating commas inside the inverted commas (see the examples above).

ALSO

- 4 Start a new line and indent when you are about to use speech.
- 5 Use a new paragraph for each speaker.



Very often the direct speech, though it consists of only one sentence, is split into two parts:

'I thought I was late,' she said, 'but I'm glad to see that I'm not.'

I thought I was late, but I'm glad to see that I'm not.

You'll notice that each part of the direct speech is enclosed in inverted commas and that each is separated from '*she said*' by a comma.

There are occasions, however, when the direct speech consists of more than one sentence, and a full stop and capital letter are required:

'Support is urgently needed,' said the manager. 'Each of you has a special job to do.'

Support is urgently needed. Each of you has a special job to do.

'*Support...said the manager*' is the whole of the sentence that you speak as the reader. The full stop comes at the end.

If a speech contains two or more sentences together, then the inverted commas come at the beginning and end of the speech, not after every sentence:

'It's really upsetting,' said Emma. 'There've been several thefts. I don't feel safe any more. Keep your bag with you.'

It's really upsetting. There've been several thefts. I don't feel safe any more. Keep your bag with you.

Try this!

Reread the rules on the first page. Insert inverted commas into the following sentences, adding separating commas, full stops and capital letters where necessary.



- 1 Oh no Craig shrieked Jessie has shredded the documents
- 2 It was an enjoyable course said Alice we ought to suggest that Armajit goes too
- 3 In my opinion said Frieda we must solve the cleaning problem first.
- 4 Make sure the path is free of ice said Shakeil we don't want the children falling over and hurting themselves