

Punctuating Speech



Punctuation Inside Inverted Commas

All commas, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks must also be enclosed by inverted commas.

For example:

'That grass looks delicious,' said the smallest Billy Goat Gruff.

'Hey, goat!' shouted the troll. 'You are not allowed to cross my bridge.'

'How can we get to the other side?' asked the Biggest Goat Gruff.

NOT: 'Get off my bridge' ! shouted the troll. ❌



Commas

Commas are another important tool to help the reader separate direct speech from the rest of the text.

Where direct speech **precedes** a **verb**, and does not end in a question mark or exclamation mark, **a comma must be used**.

For example:

'We need to get to the other side,' **moaned** the goats.

'Those goats are always disturbing my sleep,' **muttered** the troll.

Commas

Where the direct speech before a verb ends in a question mark or exclamation mark however, this punctuation **replaces** the comma.

For example:

'Who goes there?' shouted the troll. ✓

NOT:

'Who goes there?', shouted the troll. ✗



Commas

Where the direct speech **follows** a **verb**, a comma must be used after the verb to indicate that direct speech is about to begin.

Note: in this context, the direct speech must always begin with a capital letter.

For example:

The smallest Billy Goat Gruff **said**, 'I'll go first.'

The Troll **shouted**, 'Who goes there?'

The biggest Billy Goat Gruff **shouted**, 'Oh no you won't!'



Punctuation Inside Inverted Commas

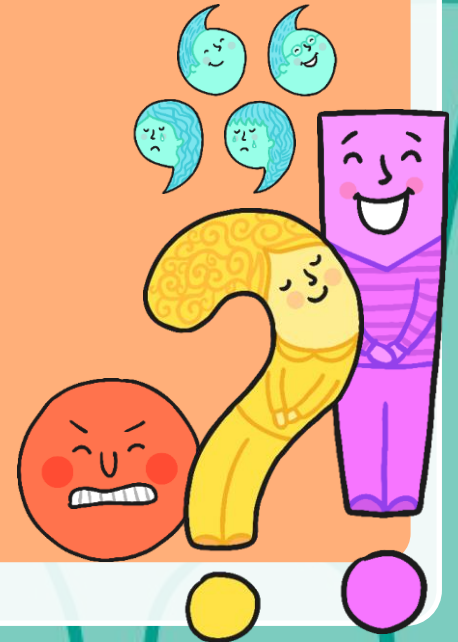
In addition, where the direct speech follows the verb, a full stop, exclamation mark or question mark **must** be used inside the inverted commas to signal the end of the speech.

For example:

The smallest Billy Goat Gruff **said**, 'I'll go first.'

The Troll **shouted**, 'Who goes there?'

The biggest goat **shouted**, 'Oh no you won't!'



New Speaker, New Line

If the direct speech in a text involves more than one speaker, a new line must be used for each new speaker. This helps the reader to follow what is being said.

For example:

‘We can’t let him win! He’s just a grumpy troll!’ said the smallest Billy Goat Gruff.

‘You’re right,’ agreed the biggest Billy Goat Gruff.

The medium-sized Billy Goat Gruff said, ‘So what shall we do?’

