

Here's a quick and dirty lesson on how to correctly punctuate your incredible dialogue.

1. **Capitalize the first word of every complete quotation**

*"Today, I'm going to the diner," Betty said.  
Betty said, "Today, I'm going to the diner."  
"Today, I'm going to the diner," Betty said. "They have meatloaf  
as the special."*

2. **Do not capitalize the first word when the second part of the quote continues after the attribution**

*"Today, I'm going to the diner," Betty said, "and I think I'll eat the  
meatloaf."*

3. **Use commas to set off the attribution**

*"Today, I'm going to the diner," Betty said.  
"Today, I'm going to the diner," Betty said, "and I think I'll eat the  
meatloaf."*

4. **Put periods and commas inside the quotation marks, *always***

*"Today, I'm going to the diner," Betty said.  
Betty said, "Today, I'm going to the diner."*

5. **Exclamation and question marks go either inside or outside quotes**

*"This meatloaf is the best!" Betty exclaimed.  
"Do you think the meatloaf is good?" Betty asked.  
Are you the waiter who said, "Get the meatloaf"?"*

6. **Don't use quotation marks with indirect quotations**

*I told Susan that I liked the meatloaf best.*

7. **Several ways to handle interior monologue**

Betty thought, "Today, I'm going to eat the meatloaf."  
Betty thought, *Today, I really want the meatloaf.*  
*Today, I really want the meatloaf.*

## 8. Use single quotation marks for quotes within quotes

“Today, I heard Susan say that the meatloaf here is the ‘best I’ve ever eaten,’” said Betty.

## 9. Quotations that extend beyond one paragraph

“I’m heading to the diner to get the meatloaf special,” Betty told June. “Do you want to come?”

“I’m not sure,” said June. “I have a headache.”

“Well, this meatloaf will take care of your headache. It is so good, you’ll forget all about the pain.

“Come on, let’s go. I’ll pick you up in fifteen minutes. You don’t even have to drive,” Betty said.

## Notes: