**Punctuating Dialogue Rules**

1. Indent for each new speaker.

(New speaker = New paragraph)

2. Only the exact words of the speaker go inside quotation marks.

3. The words used to identify the speaker are called the tag line (e.g., Mary said or Jane replied). Words like *said, replied, screamed*, etc. are never capitalized in a tag line.

4. There are three types of tag lines

a. **Before** the quote: the comma always follows the tag line and the beginning letter of the quote is always capitalized (e.g., Jon asked, “Where did everyone go?”).

b. **After** the quote: the ending punctuation after the actual quote (before the tag line) can never be a period (e.g., “Every one decided to go,” said Jon.). If the sentence would normally end with a period, substitute a comma. An exception to this rule is end marks for questions or exclamations (e.g., “Where did everyone go?” asked Jon).

c. In the **middle** of the quote:

* In between two separate sentences (quotes): a period follows the tag line and the beginning of the second sentence (quote) is capitalized (e.g., “I have a dog,” said Jane. “Do you have any pets?”).
* When the tag line splits one sentence (quote) into two parts: a comma follows the first part of the quote and the tag line (e.g., “I have two dogs,” said Jane, “that fight all the time.”)