

# USING DIALOGUE: RULES OF DIRECT SPEECH

## Read the following passage:

I rushed into the house and threw my wet bag onto the floor. "Hello, Mum," I called.

"Would you like a hot drink, darling?" Mum asked.

I smiled gratefully at her and replied, "Love one, Mum. We had a rotten day at school. First of all there's the rain – it was bad enough, but I'd forgotten my things for Home Ec. so I couldn't do my cooking."

"How many times," frowned my mother, putting down her book, "have I told you to write your ingredients on the kitchen noticeboard!"

"I know, Mum," I sighed. "This morning was such a rush I just forgot."

"Well don't let it happen again, my girl. For being so disorganized, you can cook dinner and I'll watch television."

## How many rules can you find? See if you can recognize them all.

1. The first word of direct speech starts with a CAPITAL LETTER, whether that word is at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence.
2. Place a comma at the end of direct speech if the sentence is not finished. Sometimes a question mark may replace the comma.
3. Place a COMMA before direct speech if the sentence is not finished.
4. Use ? or ! if the tone of the speech suggests this.
5. If direct speech is broken up, use COMMAS, before and after the break. Take care you don't use a capital letter to begin the broken bit!
6. Place a COMMA before the PERSON ADDRESSED.
7. When lots of sentences are spoken together, use only one set of quotation marks. It would look messy if you used quotation marks around each sentence.
8. VARY your sentences and use words other than 'said'.
9. Begin a new line for each new speaker or change in speaker.

(Source: All Hallows School)

