




Direct
and
Indirect
Speech

Reporting speech

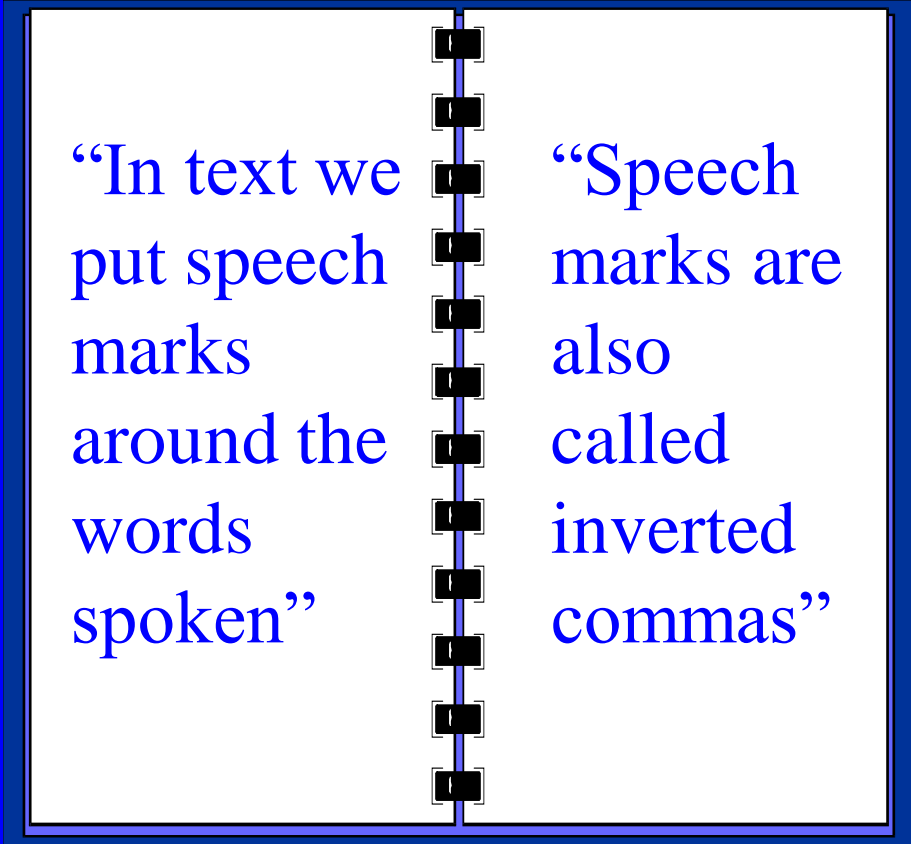
There are two ways of reporting what somebody says;

- direct speech
- indirect (or reported) speech.

Direct Speech



In direct speech we use the speaker's own words.



“In text we put speech marks around the words spoken”

“Speech marks are also called inverted commas”

Indirect speech

In indirect speech (sometimes called reported speech) we do not use the exact words of the speaker.

Instead we report what was said.

We sometimes need to change pronouns and verb tenses. We don't use speech marks.



“I am going home.”

Helen said she was going home.

Punctuating Direct Speech.

When using direct speech in your writing you need to use the correct punctuation.

- The exact words spoken must be enclosed in speech marks.
- The first word of the speech must begin with a capital letter.
- The words in the speech marks must be separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.
- You must use a new line when a new speaker begins to speak.

Using Speech in Your Writing

Using speech in fiction and non-fiction writing adds variety.

However, writing out long pieces of direct speech can make your writing confusing. It also slows down the action.

Reported speech can summarise what the speaker has said so that the action moves along more quickly.

Reported speech is useful when you want a contrast between what a character says and what he or she is thinking. (e.g. Lady Macbeth)

Advantages and disadvantages of each type of speech.

- Direct speech can show what a character is like.
- Long speeches can be boring.
- Too many speakers can confuse the reader.
- Direct speech can add variety to writing.
- Indirect speech can be summarised briefly so that it does not slow down the pace of the action.
- It can show a contrast between what a character is saying and what he or she is thinking.

Summary

- In your writing use mainly reported speech. Use direct speech only to emphasise the main points your characters make.
- Don't bore and confuse your readers by writing out long conversations between your characters.
- Direct speech should be used sparingly.
- It is most effective when only the most forceful statements are put into direct speech.