

FORMATTING DIALOGUE: THREE EXAMPLES

Basic rules:

- usually every new speaker gets a new paragraph
- punctuation always goes inside the quotation marks
- you don't have to use a tag (he said, she exclaimed, etc.) for every single line of dialogue, but always make sure it's clear who's talking when
- if it sounds like the dialogue and the tag are all one sentence, punctuate them that way
- each of the examples below has a slightly different feel, use whichever seems best for the tone and style of your work

Example One

Before I knew it he was sitting and talking to me for an hour or more most days. A typical conversation would go something like this:

Jake would say, "I went for a five mile run earlier today."

"Why would you do that?"

"This town is backwards. I always get lost."

"No," I'd say, "you're just backwards 'cause you're from the south."

"Well at least we talk right." Jake laughed. "You northerners have a weird accent."

Example Two

Before I knew it he was sitting and talking to me for an hour or more most days. A typical conversation would go something like this:

Jake: I went for a five mile run earlier today.

Me: Why would you do that?

Jake: This town is backwards. I always get lost.

Me: No, you're just backwards 'cause you're from the south.

Jake: Well, at least we talk right. You northerners have a weird accent.

Me: It's not us. It's you people from the south who have a wicked accent.

Jake: See? I told you ya'll can't talk right.

Example Three

Before I knew it he was sitting and talking to me for an hour or more most days. A typical conversation would go something like this:

Jake would say something like, "I went for a five mile run earlier today," and I would reply, "Why would you do that?"

"This town is backwards. I always get lost."

"No," I'd say, "you're just backwards 'cause you're from the south."

"Well at least we talk right." Jake laughed. "You northerners have a weird accent."