

Tricky Tricks

...for Beginning Quotes

Rule # 1: Basic Quote With Speech Tag at the Beginning

A wise person once said, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Tips:

1. Write the **speech tag** (words showing who said the words you are quoting), **then a comma, then the quote.**
2. An **ending period always goes inside** the closing quotation mark.
3. This type of quote inclusion is best if you are just assigned the addition of a quote (no book citation in parentheses, etc).

Details of Quote Rule #1:

A wise person once said, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try **again.**"

*said,--A comma should follow most beginning speech tags. (Only use a colon if the beginning speech tag is a complete sentence.)

*"If—Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* **again.**—Be sure your ending period goes **inside** the closing quotation mark.

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Rule # 2: Basic Quote With Speech Tag at the End

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," said a wise person.

Tips:

1. Write the quote first, beginning with a capital letter.
2. At the end of the quote, **do not put a period**, but rather **put a comma**. (You may only have one period per sentence. If your quotation-with-ending-speech-tag-is a statement, you must put a comma at the end of the quote rather than a period since your sentence will end with a period.)
3. The **comma** at the end of the quotation **must be inside the closing quotation mark**. (Ending periods and commas always go inside the closing quotation mark.)
4. This type of quote inclusion is best if you are just assigned a quote (no parenthetical book citation in parentheses, etc.).
5. Put a period at the end of the entire sentence.

Details of Quote Rule #2:

"**If** at first you don't succeed, try, try again," said a wise person.

***If**—Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* again—Be sure to end your quote with a comma when you have an ending speech tag (rather than a period) since your complete sentence will end in a period. Also be sure that your comma is inside the closing quotation mark.

* said a wise person. —An ending speech tag begins with a lower case letter (unless the first word of it is a proper noun). The entire sentence ends with a period since the sentence itself is a statement.

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Rule # 3: Question Quote With Speech Tag at the Beginning

Charlie Brown asked, “Where have I gone wrong?”

Tips:

1. Write the speech tag just like you do in any quote with a beginning speech tag.
2. **Follow the beginning speech tag with a comma**, just like always.
3. Begin the quote with a capital letter, just like always.
4. Put the **question mark inside the closing quotation mark since the question mark itself is part of the quote.** Question marks and exclamation points go inside closing quotation marks only **when they are part of the quoted material.**

Details of Quote Rule #3:

Charlie Brown asked, “**Where** have I gone wrong?”

- *, “**Where** —Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.
- * wrong?”—A question mark or exclamation point goes inside the closing quotation mark if it is part of the quote itself, such as a question or exclamatory sentence that is a quote.
- * asked. – A comma should follow most beginning speech tags. (Only use a colon if the speech tag is a complete sentence.).

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Rule # 4: Question Quote With Speech Tag at the End

“Where have I gone wrong?” asked Charlie Brown.

Tips:

1. Start your quote with a capital letter (assuming it is a complete sentence).
2. Put your **question mark inside your closing quotation mark if the question mark is part of the quote. Question marks and exclamation points go inside the closing quotation mark when they are part of the quoted material.**
3. **Begin the speech tag with a lower case letter** (*asked Charlie Brown*) unless your speech tag starts with a proper noun (Charlie Brown): “Where have I gone wrong?” **C**harlie Brown asked.
4. End the entire sentence (following the speech tag) with a period.

Details of Quote Rule #4:

“**Where** have I gone **wrong?**” asked Charlie Brown.

*“**Where** —Most of the time, a quote begins with a capital letter.

* **wrong?**”—A question mark or exclamation point goes **inside** the closing quotation mark only if it is part of the quote itself, such as a question or exclamatory sentence that is a quote.

Note: A quote sentence may contain both a question mark (at the end of the quote question) and a period (at the end of the whole sentence.)

* Charlie Brown.—Place a period at the end of the entire sentence. This is the punctuation for the whole sentence.

Note: If speech tag at the end does not begin with a proper noun, do not capitalize the first word of it:

- (1) “Where have I gone wrong?” **he** asked.
- (2) “Where have I gone wrong?” asked Charlie Brown.
- (3) “Where have I gone wrong?” **C**harlie Brown asked.