

The rules of grammar exist for a reason. That reason is to make sure that what your writing makes sense to your readers. If you refuse to follow them, your readers can easily become confused about what you're trying to say. That leads to them becoming frustrated and annoyed, in turn causing them to put your book down for good. This is especially true in the case of children, who are still learning the rules of grammar and can easily get confused. Learn to write dialogue correctly and you will have a better chance at keeping your reader entertained and involved in your story.

Thankfully though with children's books, they are usually relatively short with simple sentences. This makes the grammar relatively simple and straightforward, unlike academic texts in which the grammar can quickly get advanced and complex. One potentially confusing area of grammar that children's fiction still has to contend with, however, are the mechanics of writing dialogue.

That's why I have briefly explained the grammar rules of writing dialogue below.

Basic Dialogue Rules

1. Two pairs of double quotation marks surround what someone says.
2. Punctuation goes inside the double quotation marks.
3. After the quotation marks, add a dialogue tag (like 'said') to identify who spoke.
4. End the sentence with a period.

Example: "I want some lemonade," Bobby said.

Dialogue Punctuation

1. For a quotation that would normally end with a period, use a comma instead. This is because the sentence is not complete until after the dialogue tag. See the example above.
2. If you place the dialogue tag in the middle of a sentence, use a comma inside the first set of quotation marks, and normal punctuation inside the second.

Example: "I want lemonade too," Suzy said, "but only if it has sugar."

3. For a quotation that would normally end with a question mark or exclamation point, use normal punctuation, but place it inside the double quotation marks.

Example: "Doesn't all lemonade have sugar?" Bobby asked.