

Punctuation in Dialog

American English Conventions



Here's your guide to life, love,
and dialog punctuation!

Dialog, then
attribution *



"Jane, I don't love you anymore," said Tarzan. **

Dialog broken
by attribution



"Tarzan," said Jane, "you always were more
interested in your elephants than you were in me."

Attribution,
then dialog



Tarzan said, "I find their conversation more
stimulating than yours."

Dialog,
attribution, then
new sentence
of dialog



"I'm going back to my father in Baltimore," said
Jane. "I'm taking my leopard-skin outfit with me."

Dialog broken
by attribution



"And I," said Tarzan, "am keeping the tree house.
There are plenty of baboons that will be glad to
share it with me."

Dialog ending
with an
exclamation
point



"And to think that I almost gave up civilization for
you, Monkey Boy!" said Jane.

Dialog ending
with a
quotation mark



"Monkey Boy?" asked Tarzan, a tear forming in
the corner of his eye.

* attribution = speaker tag = said Tarzan

** After each speaker is made obvious in real dialog, only a few attributions are needed for clarity.

{ Tarzan dialog taken from Writing Fiction [in High School].
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