Punctuating Dialogue Rules
1. Indent for each new speaker (New speaker = New paragraph)
2. Only the exact words of the speaker go inside quotation marks.
3. The words used to identify the speaker are called a dialogue tag, or tag line (e.g., Mary said or Jane replied). Words like said, replied, screamed, etc. are never capitalized in a dialogue tag.
4. There are three types of dialogue tags:
   a. Before the quote: the comma always follows the tag line and the beginning letter of the quote is always capitalized (e.g., Jon asked, “Where did everyone go?”).
   b. After the quote: the ending punctuation after the actual quote (before the tag) can never be a period (e.g., “Every one decided to go,” said Jon.). If the sentence would normally end with a period, substitute a comma. An exception to this rule is end marks for questions or exclamations (e.g., “Where did everyone go?” asked Jon).
   c. In the Middle of the quote:
      1) In between two separate sentences (quotes): a period follows the tag line and the beginning of the second sentence (quote) is capitalized (e.g., “I have a dog,” said Jane. “Do you have any pets?”).
      2) When the tag line splits one sentence (quote) into two parts: a comma follows the first part of the quote and the tag line (e.g., “I have two dogs,” said Jane, “that fight all the time.”).

Practice Set—Rewrite each of these sentences, correctly formatting the dialogue.
1. peggy said i have two cats do you have any pets
2. i have two dogs three fish and seven snails said joe
3. i have two cats said peggy do you have any pets
4. i’m not sure said sue if i know how to do this test
5. has he brought any papers home asked mother
6. he shook the tree so hard said joan that the apples fell to the ground
7. we’re going to write an editorial today said mr cumberland

8. get out of here she said before i call the police

9. dad said let’s go to eagle park if it doesn’t rain

10.i’ve never been to california remarked jane maybe my family will go this summer

11.peggy said why are you here so early

12.i’m not sure said sue if i have a detention this morning or not

13.i don’t think there are any detentions today said fred

14.are you kidding asked sue i can’t believe i got up early for nothing
Practice 4
Rewrite the following conversation, following the rules of proper dialoguing.

get your room cleaned up mother said or you’re not going to the show
chris shouted that’s not fair it’s joe’s room too
joe will be home later to take care of his half now are you going to get started mother scolded
i guess so muttered chris why doesn’t joe ever have to do anything around here
he does plenty mom said
chris said i never see him do much of anything but study
well answered mom you’re never around very much