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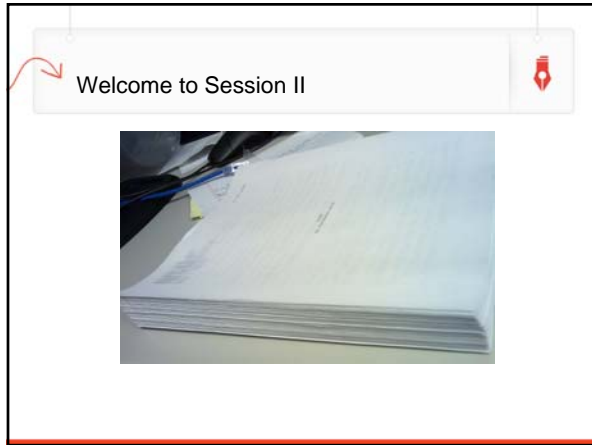
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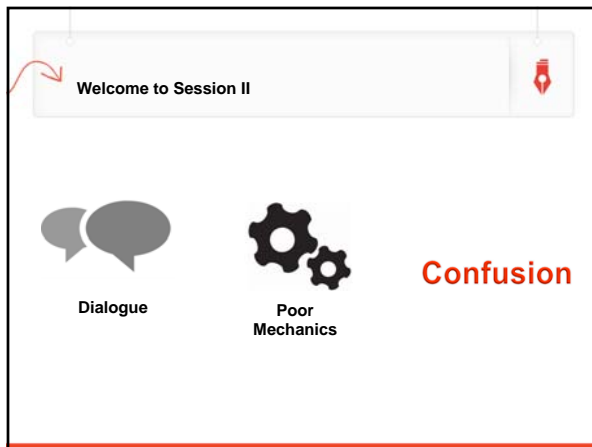
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Welcome to Session II

Correcting mistakes in the mechanics of your dialogue provides clarity.

Dialogue      Good Mechanics

CLARITY

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Session II Agenda

- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Ellipses & Dashes
- Dialogue Tags

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Correct Use of Quotation Marks

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**Correct Use of Quotation Marks**

- Quotation marks indicate when a person is speaking.
- Quotation marks come in pairs – one at the beginning of the passage of quoted speech and one at the end.
- Some countries use single quotation marks: ‘ \_\_\_\_ ’
- American English utilizes double quotation marks: “ \_\_\_\_ ”
- Quotation marks are generally followed by dialogue tags.

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**Correct Grammar and Punctuation**

**EXAMPLES**

“The weatherman said it’s going to rain today,” Simon said.

“I hate this rain,” she said, sighing.

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**Correct Grammar and Punctuation**

**EXAMPLES**

“I want to go outside,” she begged.

“I want to go outside,” She begged.

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**EXAMPLES**

"I'm hungry," Alice said.

Alice said, "I'm hungry."

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**EXAMPLES**

"I went to the store," Alice said.

"I went to the store." Alice said.

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**EXAMPLES**

"What time does the party start?" he asked.

"What time does the party start?" He asked.

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**EXAMPLES**

"I think we're lost. I don't recognize this place," said Ella.

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**SPOT CHECK**

Which of these three examples is correct?

- "I want this test to be over", Jenny whined.
- "I want this test to be over," Jenny whined.
- "I want this test to be over" Jenny whined.

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 



Placement of the Dialogue Tag Impacts  
Tone & Grammar

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**Dialogue tag in the middle of the sentence**

"I already told you," my sister said, "we're leaving in five minutes."

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**Dialogue tag in the middle of the sentence**

"I don't know why," my mother said, "that you insist on making that racket."

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**More than one complete sentence within dialogue**

"I don't want to argue anymore," John said. "What are we having for dinner?"

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation

**More than one complete sentence within dialogue**

"I don't know what you want! I bring home a nice paycheck, I buy you jewelry, I take you out to nice restaurants and on vacations. You have anything you want and I don't question you on one thing," Jason said, glaring at Alison.

"Yet somehow you're still not happy."

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation

"I'm excited for our vacation," Jessica said. "I want it to start right now."

"I'm excited," Jessica said, "for our vacation."

"I'm excited for our vacation." Jessica said. "I want it to start right now."

"I'm excited," Jessica said, "For our vacation."

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation

Using dashes and ellipses within dialogue

 ... Ellipses	 — Dashes
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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**Using dashes and ellipses within dialogue**

**Dash:**

**"What the—" John exclaimed.**

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**Using dashes and ellipses within dialogue**

**Ellipses:**

**"I'm not sure if ..." Amy said, biting her lip.**

**"I wasn't sure ... if I should tell you," Carla said.**

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Correct Grammar and Punctuation 

**Using dashes and ellipses within dialogue**

**"I didn't know if he'd want ... I mean—" Carla said.**

**"Of course he'd want to see you," John interrupted.**

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**Correct Grammar and Punctuation**

**Using dashes and ellipses within dialogue**

To convey abrupt stops, interruptions, or a rapid change of topic, use a dash.

To convey hesitation or reluctance, indicate a long pause, or show a speaker trailing off mid-sentence, use ellipses.

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**Formatting Dialogue**

**Example:**

John wasn't sure what time the movie started, but he did not want to be late for his first date with Holly. He arrived outside the theater a half hour early and paced, trying to calm the butterflies in his stomach, half-terrified that she wouldn't show up. When he saw her, he was almost overcome with relief.

"You look beautiful," he said.

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**Formatting Dialogue**

**Do you always have to start dialogue with a new paragraph?**

**Not if it's the same character who is both narrating and speaking.**

**Example:**

She stared at him, trying to imagine him as an international computer hacker. This mild-mannered neighbor who drove a 10-year-old Toyota and lived in a two-bedroom apartment? It didn't seem possible. "You can't be serious," she said.

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Formatting Dialogue

**Dialogue with multiple speakers**

**Example:**

"What time does the movie start?" Penelope asked.

"At seven, I think," said Lily.

"I don't mind driving," Alice volunteered.

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Formatting Dialogue

**Dialogue with multiple speakers**

**Example:**

"Where are we going?" Pete asked.

"To the mall," Jack replied.

"Where are we going?" Pete asked. "To the mall," Jack replied.

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Formatting Dialogue

**Passages with both narrative prose and multiple speakers**

**Example:**

Amber had never felt this way before. How was it possible? She had been married, for Pete's sake, married for more than ten years, yet not once had she ever felt this kind of passion with Eric. She wanted to be with Blaine every second, to breathe the same air, to share the same space. It was a feeling so powerful it made her ache. "I love you," she whispered.

"I love you too," Blaine said immediately, taking her hand and squeezing it.

"Please don't leave," she said. "Can't you postpone this trip? Tell the clients something came up?"

He shook his head. "You know I can't."

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**Formatting Dialogue**

**Passages with both narrative prose and multiple speakers**

**Example:**

Amber had never felt this way before. How was it possible? She had been married, for Pete's sake, married for more than ten years, yet not once had she ever felt this kind of passion with Eric. She wanted to be with Blaine every second, to breathe the same air, to share the same space. It was a feeling so powerful it made her ache. "I love you," she whispered. "I love you too," Blaine said immediately, taking her hand and squeezing it. "Please don't leave," she said. "Can't you postpone this trip? Tell the clients something came up?" He shook his head. "You know I can't."

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**Minimizing Dialogue Tags**

- Dialogue tags exist to tell the reader who is speaking.
- You don't necessarily need a dialogue tag at the end of every line.
- The fewer dialogue tags you have, the better.

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**Minimizing Dialogue Tags**

**Example 1:**

"I don't want to go in there," Sarah whispered.

"We have to," Evan said. "It's the only way we're going to find out the truth."

"If we get caught, he'll kill us," she said.

"We'll be fast. He won't know we were here," Evan said.

"I don't know," she said.

"Come on. We're wasting time," he said.

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Minimizing Dialogue Tags

**Example 2:**

"I don't want to go in there," Sarah whispered.  
"We have to," Evan said. "It's the only way we're going to find out the truth."  
"If we get caught, he'll kill us."  
"We'll be fast. He won't know we were here."  
"I don't know," she said.  
"Come on. We're wasting time."

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Dialogue Checklist



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Dialogue Checklist

- Does each quoted passage include two sets of quotes – one at the beginning, one at the end?
- Is the capitalization correct?
- If you're using a dialogue tag, is there a comma separating the quoted passage from the tag?
- Are you putting the commas, periods, and other punctuation **INSIDE** the quote mark?
- Does each dialogue passage begin with a new indented paragraph?
- When switching between two or more speakers, does each new dialogue passage start with a new indented paragraph?
- Are you minimizing the use of dialogue tags? Are there any dialogue tags that you can cut?

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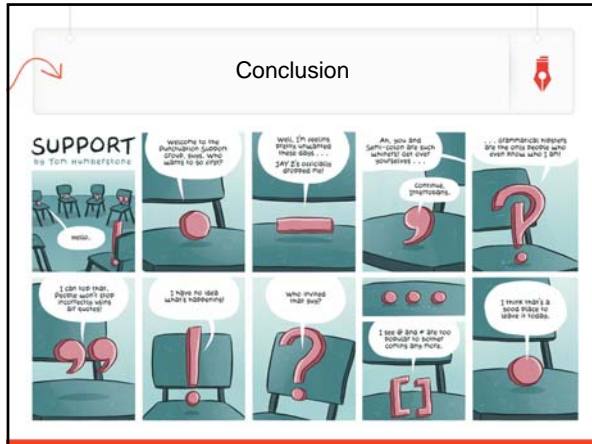
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