

Direct and Indirect speech

Speech marks, which are also called **inverted commas** or **quotation marks**, are used to indicate direct speech - the exact words spoken by the speaker. Here is an example from the short story, *Mr Walker*. Notice what the words tell you about the speakers and how they bring life to the story.

'Oh, will you shut up, you silly old fool!' Mrs McDonald finally shouted at him. At the same instant Sister Carr erupted with 'Nurse, has he had his sleeping pills?'

Indirect speech

Here is the same text in indirect speech where the words are reported. Speech marks are not required because the exact words are not used.

Mrs McDonald called him a silly old fool and shouted at him to shut up. At the same instant Sister Carr erupted, asking if he had had his sleeping pills.

Compare the two versions. Which of the two versions has the most impact? Find two more examples of direct speech in the story *Mr Walker*, spoken by different characters. Choose two of these and write them as indirect speech.