

Question Marks

Rule 1. Use a question mark only after a direct question.

Correct: *Will you go with me?*

Incorrect: *I'm asking if you will go with me?*

Rule 2a. A question mark replaces a period at the end of a sentence.

Incorrect: *Will you go with me?.*

Rule 2b. Because of Rule 2a, capitalize the word that follows a question mark.

Some writers choose to overlook this rule in special cases.

Example: *Will you go with me? with Joe? with anyone?*

Rule 3a. Avoid the common trap of using question marks with **indirect questions**, which are statements that contain questions. Use a period after an indirect question.

Incorrect: *I wonder if he would go with me?*

Correct:

I wonder if he would go with me.

OR

I wonder: Would he go with me?

Rule 3b. Some sentences are statements—or demands—in the form of a question. They are called **rhetorical questions** because they don't require or expect an answer. Many should be written without question marks.

Examples:

Why don't you take a break.

Would you kids knock it off.

What wouldn't I do for you!

Rule 4. Use a question mark when a sentence is half statement and half question.

Example: *You do care, don't you?*

Rule 5a. The placement of question marks with quotation marks follows logic. If a question is within the quoted material, a question mark should be placed inside the quotation marks.

Examples:

She asked, "Will you still be my friend?"

The question *Will you still be my friend?* is part of the quotation.

Do you agree with the saying, "All's fair in love and war"?

The question *Do you agree with the saying?* is outside the quotation.

Rule 5b. If a quoted question ends in midsentence, the question mark replaces a comma.

Example: *"Will you still be my friend?" she asked.*