

# Sentence endings

In all cases, make sure you have punctuation, aside from one exception with ellipses.

In dialogue, you often face sentences that are half-complete, abruptly cut or trailing off. You have four options: a tilde (~), an em dash (—), a comma (,) or an ellipses (...). Choose the one that fits the best with the situation.

- Ending with a tilde (~) as punctuation is acceptable. Sometimes, this fits the tone better than an exclamation mark or an ellipses.
- If a strong emphasis is needed, using ~! or ~? is acceptable.
- If a line ends with an em-dash (—), start a new sentence on the next line, treat it as if you used a full stop.
- Line ending with a comma (,): the next follow-up line (from the same speaker) should start lowercase with no prefixed punctuation.
- Ellipses (...) have multiple use cases but still should be used as sparingly as possible. See ellipses section below for further instructions.

## Interrobangs

!? is the Japanese one. ?! is the English one.

## Tilde (~)

- Do not overuse them.
- Can convey playfulness or imply that the character is speaking in a teasing tone.
- Does not require the use of a full stop after it, but it can sometimes be followed by an exclamation or question mark.

## Ellipsis (...)

Plural: “ellipses.” Not to be confused with the mathematical term, “ellipse,” which shares the same plural writing.

Make sure that each ellipsis only has 3 full stops/dots. **NO FOUR-DOTTED ELLIPSES. NO TWO-DOTTED ELLIPSES EITHER.**

### **Ellipses can indicate a meaningful pause in speech.**

“Meaningful” is the key word here because speech has pauses of all sorts, differing in length and sentence positioning and having an ellipsis for every single pause would result in a script with more ellipses than words. We want to avoid that. In this usage, have a space after the ellipses (think of it as a “super-comma”).

- Assuming the previous sentence trails off for a considerable pause, If the next line from the same speaker is the same sentence, start the sentence with an ellipsis.

“That’s... not a good idea.”

**Ellipses can indicate trailing in or trailing out of speech.** Insert an end ellipses for the first line.

It’s almost as if you’re... // dead.  
It’s... // almost as if you’re... // dead.

If an ellipsis is used within a single sentence (i.e. not connecting two separate sentences on different lines), do not put a space after it.

e.g. “It’s almost as if you’re...dead.”

**Ellipses can continue the thoughts of already finished lines.** Insert a start ellipses for the second line.

I don’t hate you. // ...or do I?

**Ellipses can be used to trail off in a standalone line, but with ending punctuation.**

Do not include any spaces before, and treat it following as the ending punctuation it is paired with.

What the...?  
You son of a...!  
You’re my... Never mind.

Note: Since the next line from the same speaker is a new sentence, start that sentence capitalized.

The first letter in a sentence starting with an ellipsis should not be capitalized if the line is picking up where the previous one left off. The only exception to this rule is the following:

- A trail-in ellipsis can also express doubt or hesitancy

e.g. “...Are you sure?”