

Using Dialogue to Advance Action and Develop Characters



Using Dialogue

Dialogue is a conversation or speech that is written down as part of a piece of narrative text.

It is usually between two or more people...



...and it can be really useful when describing characters or advancing a story's plot.

Punctuating Speech

When writing dialogue, it's important that you punctuate the speech correctly.

“ ”

ABC

?!



“We’ve gone the wrong way... again,” sighed Borys, who was fed up of flying around in circles.



“No we haven’t!” shouted Beryl over the buzz of hundreds of pairs of beating wings. “Queen Betty knows the way and, anyway, I’m sure that we’ve not seen this patch of flowers before.”

Using Dialogue to Advance the Action

Dialogue can be great when advancing the plot of a story. Try using your characters to tell the reader what is happening.

“Rosie, what’s that?” sighed Rosie with one hand said, festering against the rotten door. It creaked slightly; James jumped. Rosie rolled her eyes at the sight of her friend being scared by a building and pushed the heavy door open. Rosie was shaking and pointing to a space just in front of her. “There... there...there’s...a...”

“I don’t like it,” said James, “it’s giving me a weird feeling.”
“What? Where? Rosie, there’s nothing there. You’re pointing at an empty space. Stop it, please; you’re scaring me,” James begged.

“It’s fine. there’s nothing he...”



How has the dialogue helped to advance the action?
Would you still know what was happening if you took away all of the speech?

Using Dialogue to Create Tension

Dialogue can really help to create tension within a text. Having two or more characters in danger can make great dialogue for your reader.

~~"Why? We've got to get out of here now!"~~
~~"We've got to get out of here now!"~~
"Why? We've got to get out of here now!" yelled Rob.

~~"We've got to get out of here now!"~~
~~"We've got to get out of here now!"~~
"We've got to get out of here now!" yelled Rob.
"There's not enough time to get out!"

"We've got to try. If we don't, we'll be trapped in here for sure."



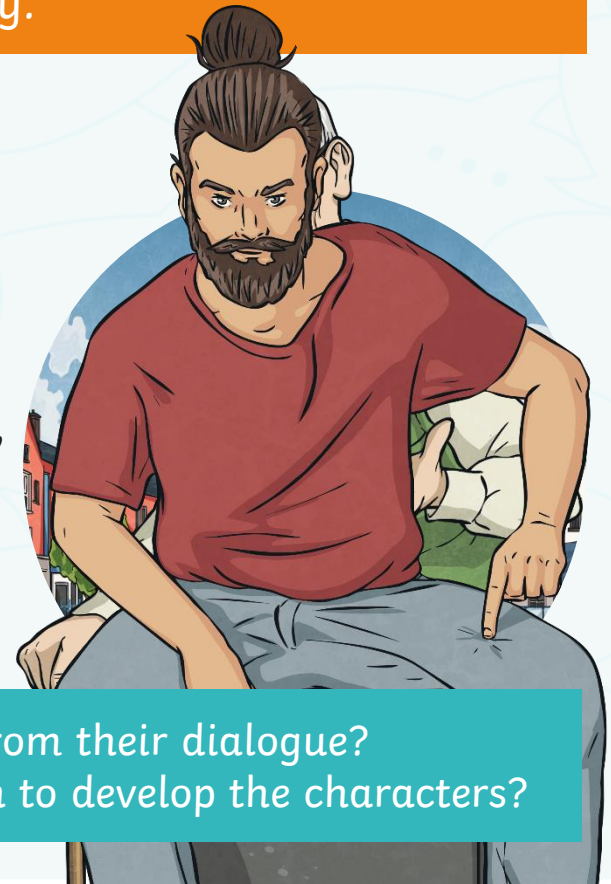
How has the dialogue helped to create tension?
Would the writing be as tense without any dialogue?

Using Dialogue to Develop Characters

Dialogue can be an interesting way to develop characters. Think about the way your characters talk and what that might say about their personality.

“Good day, sir?” said an older gentleman while waiting for a bus. “What fine weather if it were to be all day on one of ‘em hover fins. Now, that’s fine transport!” “You what?” exclaimed a second man, who also happened to be waiting. “What is you on about? It’s well ‘ot and I ain’t likin’ it.”

“I do beg your pardon; it’s just that I rarely manage to leave the house these days and I find a spot of sunshine to be most beneficial.



What can you tell about the characters from their dialogue?
How has the author used different types of speech to develop the characters?

beneath this charmingly infrastructure.

Recap

Dialogue can be really useful when advancing the action and developing characters in your writing.



Using Dialogue to Advance the Action

Use your characters' dialogue to tell the story. Remember to have your characters talk about the events otherwise the plot will not advance.



Using Dialogue to Create Tension

Use the dialogue between your characters to create tension. Try making them shout or stutter to give the impression of urgency or fear.



Using Dialogue to Develop Characters

Use the way that your character speaks and their choice of words to show your reader more about their personality, attitude and viewpoint.

Congratulations!

You are now an expert
at using dialogue to
advance action and
develop characters.



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