



ELA Virtual Learning

Creative Writing

April 13, 2020



Creative Writing

Lesson: Mon., April 13

Objective/Learning Target: Students will understand the function of dialogue within a work of fiction.

What does good dialogue do?

- reveals character
- creates conflict / tension
- moves the story forward
- creates a sense of authenticity



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Read the following story: [“The End of Something”](#) by Ernest Hemingway

As you do, consider the purpose of dialogue. In your journal, record one sentence/exchange where you feel like the dialogue is serving a particular purpose.



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Write: In your journal, write for 7-10 minutes on your experience of this story. Think about the dialogue you recorded. What was it about this line or exchange that helped you understand the story (or a particular character)? What drew you to this line/exchange?



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“There’s our old ruin, Nick,” Marjorie said.
Nick, rowing, looked at the white stone in the green trees.
“There it is,” he said.

Example: These lines show us the first signs of tension in the story. The dialogue is short/succinct, and though it seems at first glance that Nick’s response is unnecessary (of course it’s there), we understand the subtext: he isn’t enjoying himself...or her for that matter.



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Practice: Now, write your own dialogue exchange. In this exchange, have two characters discuss something completely separate from what they're *really* talking about (without ever revealing it).



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Model:

Jeff glanced at the wire brush in her hand.

“Should you really be using that on the non-stick skillet?”

Susie’s arms stopped, and her shoulders relaxed. Water streamed from the faucet into the curved lip of the pan, ringing.

“The coating,” he said. “It can be toxic.”

“The skillet is fine,” she said. Her shoulders raised again, her arms working, and the brush continued to scratch its song into the surface. “It’s lasted this long.”

Jeff tried to remember when they’d bought it. But it was hard to remember a time without it. In fact, he couldn’t picture any other pan they might have shared.

“Nothing lasts forever,” he said.

Susie dropped the pan into the sink, laughing. She shut off the water and sighed.

“There’s something seared to it,” she said. “Care to give it a shot?”



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Self-Assessment

Have someone else read the dialogue, or read back over it to yourself (aloud). As you review, check for the following:

- Can the reader deduce what the two characters are *really* discussing?
- Did you avoid explicitly naming the conflict?
- Are the characters made distinct through dialogue?
- Does the dialogue move the scene forward?
- Do you avoid “conversation” that’s unrelated to the scene?



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Additional Practice/Resources:

[How to Format Dialogue in Fiction](#)