

# Dialogue

Dialogue is a useful tool to incorporate into your narrative writing. Not only does it help make your narrative more interesting, but it can also show a speaker's personality, keep the action moving, and add information to your story. While a narrative isn't composed entirely of dialogue, incorporating some dialogue into your writing will help improve your narrative overall.

- ✓ Use dialogue to SHOW instead of TELL
- ✓ Use slang, dialects, and other formal / informal language to improve characterization
- ✓ Make sure your dialogue sounds natural for that character, advances the plot, and advances the growth of your character
- ✓ Find other ways to say "said" (refer to *300+ Ways to Say 'Said'* handout)

## Punctuating Dialogue

*When in doubt about punctuating dialogue, reference any novel to see how it's done!*

1. Use a comma to set off a speaker's exact words from the rest of the sentence.

**"Justin, I'm so happy to meet you," said Melissa.**

2. Place periods and commas inside quotation marks.

**"Hi," Heather said. "Welcome to my new home."**

3. Place an exclamation point or a question mark outside quotation marks when it punctuates the main sentence, and inside when it punctuates the quotation.

**What if someone said to you, "You've won a million dollars!?"**

**I would say, "Are you kidding me?"**

4. If a new person begins to speak, start a new paragraph and remember to indent five spaces.

**"Welcome to my home," General Zaroff remarked. "Would you like to see my collection of heads?"**

**"I think I'd rather not," responded Rainsford. "I'm actually feeling quite tired."**

## Practice

Practice incorporating dialogue into your narrative. Write some dialogue that would fit well in the beginning of your narrative.