



Making Characterization and Dialogue Work Together

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Good characterization and dialogue go hand in hand. The two are inseparable; you can't have characterization without good dialogue." Dialogue is an intrinsic part of characterization because the more you realize the dialogue, the more your characters come to life and enhance your story.

The following five ways enhance dialogue to reveal essential traits for your characters:

- 1. Be aware of what your characters would like, and use their speech to subtly deliver information about them.**

Every person speaks differently and so should your characters. The words they choose and how they say them tell everything to the reader, where they live, their education levels, and, in many ways, their ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

- 2. Use dialogue to reveal a character's inner turmoil, growth and change.**

Think about how you might use an ongoing exchange of dialogue to help readers see a character's evolution.

- 3. Don't forget to consider what isn't said.**

What characters don't say reveals as much, if not more, than explicitly stated dialogue. This is called subtext, "subtext"—what characters are saying between the lines—is what separates the amateurs from the pros in dialogue writing. It's a concept that you need to understand before you can write a meaningful word, short story, play, or screenplay.

- 4. Reveal intense emotions through dialogue.**

An exchange between any set of characters reveals the underflow of emotion meant to move the scene forward.

- 5. The use of implied dialogue, where the quotation marks, creates another effect.**

Implied dialogue reveals powerful information to the reader but not necessarily to the other characters in the scene. Writers should incorporate implied dialogue because it creates mystery and involves the reader.