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COVENTRY 2018



# Doing it with Dialogue



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## Is dialogue really necessary?

“ I can usually tell the story I want to in less than 10,000 words. I'd really like to accomplish writing a novel and I have a complex idea I want to use and explore, but I am worried I won't need 75,000 words to tell it.

Most popular novels are chock full of dialogue, and I find it easy to write. I'd feel guilty about padding out a story when I could easily paraphrase or summarise a conversation though. Is dialogue necessary?

**johntait.org** on the StackExchange *Writing beta* Forum

<https://writing.stackexchange.com/questions/7934/is-dialogue-in-a-novel-necessary-or-just-padding>

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**A great reply = a dialogue says a 1000 words**

“ **Reported speech: He asked her what she was doing.**

**Dialogue 1: "What'cha doin'?"**

**Dialogue 2: "What the bloody *hell* are you doing?"**

**Dialogue 3: "W-w-w-what are y-y-you doing?"**

**Dialogue 4: "If I may be so bold, may I ask what the young Miss is doing?"**

**Dialogue 5: "By the bloody battleaxe of the wargod Sarnis, what on earth are you up to now?"**

**lexi** on the StackExchange *Writing beta* Forum

<https://writing.stackexchange.com/questions/7934/is-dialogue-in-a-novel-necessary-or-just-padding>

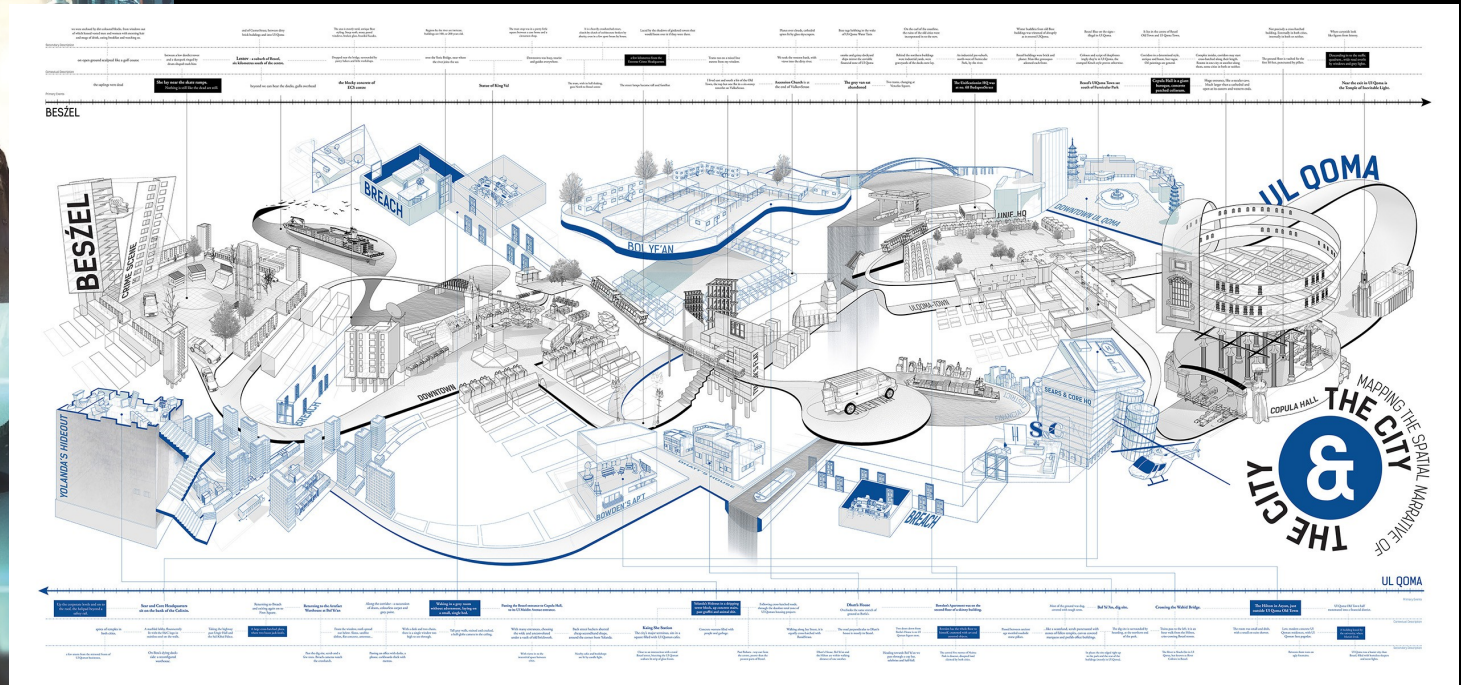
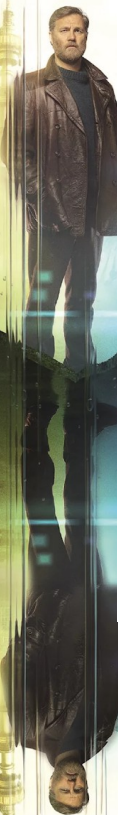
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## China Miéville *The City & the City*

Now a major  
BBC TV series,  
starring David  
Morrissey

## The City & The City China Miéville



Simon Rowe *Map of Beszel and Ul Qoma*  
<http://pr2014.aaschool.ac.uk/DIP-02/Simon.Rowe#image-2>

Now a BBC Programme **BBC**

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"Someone's fucked up then." "Yeah. Or doesn't care." "Okay," I said. "I want you on this. What are you doing at the moment?" "Nothing that can't wait." "I want you to relocate for a bit. Got any contacts here still?" She pursed her lips. "Track them down if you can; if not, have a word with some of the local guys, see who their singers are. I want you on the ground. Listen out, go round the estate—what's this place called again?" "Pocost Village." She laughed without humour; I raised an eyebrow. "It takes a village," I said. "See what you can turn up." "My commissar won't like it." "I'll deal with him. It's Bashazin, right?" "You'll square it? So am I being seconded?" "Let's not call it anything right now. Right now I'm just asking you to focus on this. And report directly to me." I gave her the numbers



**For convenience, I was reading a pdf copy, and the Reader had lost some of the formatting, including**

- **some of the special characters (Beszel -> Besel)**
- **all italics**
- **many of the line breaks**
- **some punctuation, including “, …, –, etc.**



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**As a result, this passage made no sense:**

**“His name was Yorjavic. The man you killed. Do you remember him?” “You knew him from before.” “How do you know?” “You told us...”**

*The City and the City, somewhere in the dodgy pdf...*



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**Was there an unnamed character in the scene?**

**Breach Cop: "His name was Yorjavic. The man you killed. Do you remember him?"**

**???: "You knew him from before."**

**Borlú: "How do you know?"**

**Breach Cop: "You told us..."**

*The City and the City, somewhere in the dodgy pdf...*



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**No; in fact, a turn had been lost:**

**Breach Cop: "His name was Yorjavic. The man you killed. Do you remember him?"**

**Borlú: "I..." = the Reader didn't stand a chance!**

**Breach Cop: "You knew him from before."**

**Borlú: "How do you know?"**

**Breach Cop: "You told us..."**

*The City and the City, p291 in the paperback copy*





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## So dialogue

- is dependent on turn-taking, and the turns must be clearly marked
- must (typically) *sound* natural but if it's a choice between naturalism and clarity, it's better to be a bit unnatural.

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“...dialogue is not intuitive, and it does not come naturally to writers. Most importantly, for effective dialogue in fiction, authors cannot simply describe a dialogue from real experience or from an imagined scene. Basically, dialogue is always created for the purpose of story development, therefore, it cannot function as a taped recording of reality; and it must be stripped of nuances that may not be true to the story or confuse the reader.

**William H. Coles** *Dialogue*

<https://www.storyinliteraryfiction.com/essays-on-writing/dialogue/>

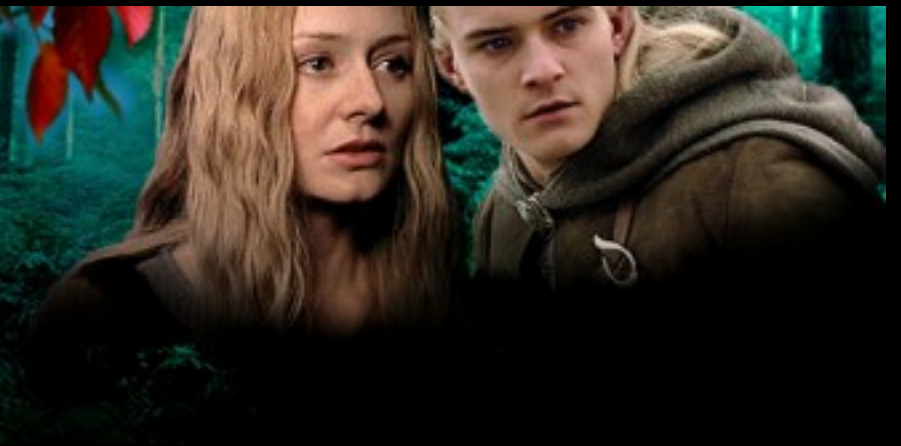


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**Dialogue, like 'show not tell' (of which it's an important part), is currently *the* fashionable way to tell a story**

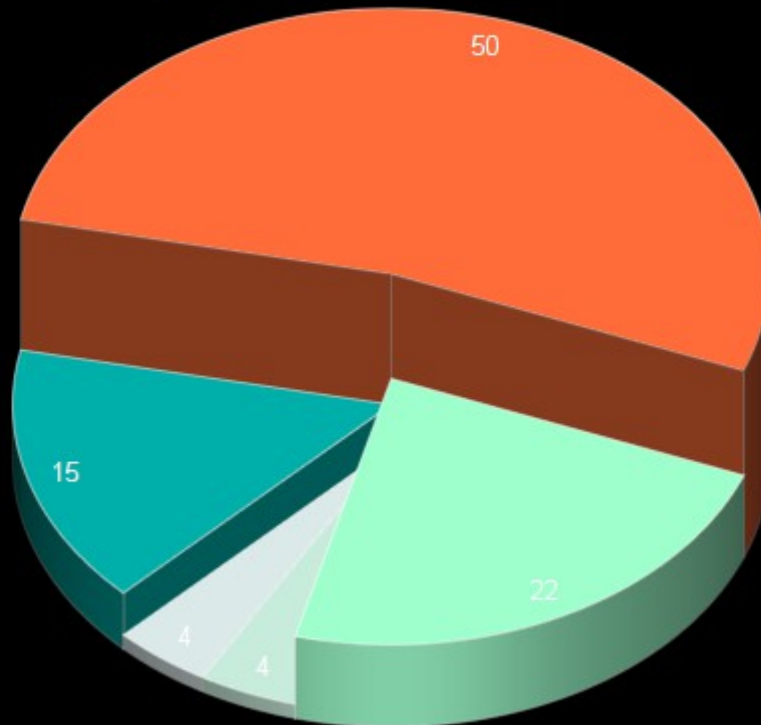
**And a lot of the advice given for writing novels is derived from screenwriting.**

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## Writercon UK 2018 Fandoms

■ Film ■ TV ■ Text ■ Game ■ Sport



**Reading and writing fanfic, we're being inspired by TV, film, comics – all media that create a narrative using dialogue & visuals.**



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## The influence of screenwriting

“

...by its very nature, a script is incomplete until the film is made. When we're thinking about character, it means that we're creating roles to be performed, not finished characters. As writers, **we must leave space for the performer\***, so it helps to **imply, suggest and insinuate, rather than define...**

In a drama, it's all about behaviour: characters are what they do. Full stop. If the novel is concerned with the flow of thoughts and feelings, then the screenplay will be concerned with the flow of dramatic action...

Giles Foden, author of *The Last King of Scotland* and a Professor of Creative Writing at the UEA

**\* or reader**



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**A great example of 'implying, suggesting and insinuating' in a dialogue:**

**"Your friend, the one you were visiting that night you bumped into me ..."** She was on her mobile, sounded like she was outdoors.

**"Andy?"** he said. **'Andy Callis?'**

**"Can you describe him?"**

**Rebus froze. "What's happened?"**

**"Look, it might not be him ..."**

**"Where are you?"**

**"Describe him for me ... that way you're not headed all the way out here for nothing."**

**Ian Rankin *A Question of Blood***



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## Showing not Telling\*

“Your friend, the one you were visiting that night you bumped into me ...” **She was on her mobile, sounded like she was outdoors.**

“Andy?” he said. “Andy Callis?”

“Can you describe him?” => **“We need to identify a body”**  
**Rebus froze. “What’s happened?”**

“Look, it might not be him ...”

“Where are you?” = **Rebus trying to get context**

“Describe him for me ... that way you’re not headed all the way out here for nothing.” => **Confirmation**

**Ian Rankin *A Question of Blood***

**\* It's not about super-detailed descriptions!**

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So what *is* dialogue?

“**dialogue (n.)**  
c. 1200, "literary work consisting of a conversation between two or more persons," from ... Greek dialogos "conversation, dialogue," related to dialogesthai "converse," from dia "across, between" + legein "speak". Sense extended by c. 1400 to "**a conversation between two or more persons.**" The mistaken belief that it can mean only "conversation between two persons" is from confusion of dia- and di-; the error goes back to at least 1532, when **trialogue** was coined needlessly for "a conversation between three persons."

<https://www.etymonline.com>





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## **So what *is* dialogue?**

**“ Dialogue is not just quotation. It is grimaces, pauses, adjustments of blouse buttons, doodles on a napkin, and crossings of legs.**

**Jerome Stern, *Making Shapely Fiction***

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## The different parts of a single turn of dialogue

**“Get out!” he cried, frantically waving his hands.**

**consists of**

- **words spoken**
- **speech tags – 'he said', 'she replied', 'they sang'...**
- **actions, usually but not always, of the speaker – bits of business before, during and after speech**
- **emotions of the speaker – thoughts, clues given in the speech tag ('he sobbed'), in adverbs ('he said, frostily'), in punctuation (! ?)**
- **silences (“...”)**

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## Punctuation

**"The rain in Spain," he said, "stays mainly on the plain."**

He said, "The rain in Spain stays mainly on the plain."

He said: "The rain in Spain stays mainly on the plain."

**'[In printing,] double quotes are the norm in the USA, single in the UK.'**

**David Crystal *Making a Point***

**"Does the rain in Spain stay mainly on the plain?" he asked.**


**"The rain in Spain?" he said. "I believe it stays mainly on the plain."**

**"It's raining!" he said.**

**"The rain in Spain," he said, opening his umbrella, "stays mainly on the plain."**

**"The rain in Spain"—he opened his umbrella—"stays mainly on the plain."**

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As fans writing fanfic, we have the advantage of knowing the character inside out; we know all of his (or her) facial expressions, we know all the subtleties of his (or her) voice, we know the gestures he (or she) makes, and we can decide whether an utterance or an action is in character just by imagining him (or her) saying it or doing it.



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## **The words spoken – showing character**

**Wilde: “May I propose dinner at the Grand Cafe? ... Rigo and his gypsy orchestra never fails to find music to match your mood.”**

**...**

**As we were shown to our table, they struck up what sounded like a Hungarian funeral march... I enquired of Oscar, “What is your mood now?”**

**He cocked his ear and listened intently to the music. “Melancholy, it seems. I had not realised. But Rigo never gets it wrong. He has mystic powers.”**

**Gyles Brandreth *Oscar Wilde and the Candlelight Murders***

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**Idiolect** The speech habits peculiar to a particular person.

## The words spoken – showing character

“Ach, **sss!** Cautious, my **precious!** More haste less speed. **We musstn't rissk our neck, musst we, precious?** No, **precious – gollum!**” He lifted his head again, blinked at the moon, and quickly shut his eyes. “**We** hate it,” he hissed. “**Nassty, nassty shivery light it is - sss - it spies on us, precious - it hurts our eyes.**”

JRR Tolkien *The Two Towers*

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**The words spoken –  
showing character**

**“Beyond the obvious facts  
that he has at some time  
done manual labour, that he  
takes snuff, that he is a  
Freemason, that he has been  
in China, and that he has  
done a considerable amount  
of writing lately, I can  
deduce nothing else.”**

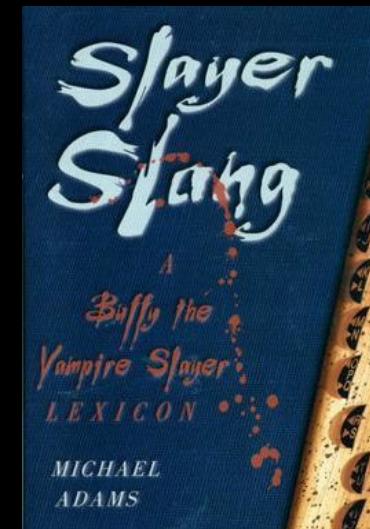
**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle *The  
Red-headed League***

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## The words spoken – sociolect

Joss Whedon listened to young people speaking, and created a slang based upon similar principles.



**Sociolect** The dialect of a particular social class.



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## The words spoken – Buffy

“

...there's nothing remarkable about the suffixes **-age**, **-ness**, and **-y** in English. But combine them with unexpected words, or in unexpected forms, and they assume a recognizable Buffyness...”

- Willow **kissage**
- large and **glowery**
- “Why the **double-shiftiness?**”

Adjectives -> nouns: “stop with **the crazy.**”

Pop cultural nouns -> verbs and adjectives:

- “I cannot believe that you of all people are trying to **Scully me!**”

**Bonnie Kneen: *The language of Buffy Speak***

<https://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2012/08/17/buffy-the-vampire-slayer/>



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## The special words – The Lord of the Rings

### Elvish & Rohirric (Anglo-Saxon)

Wherever possible, use phrases from canon:

- *Gîl síla erin lû e-govaded vîn* A star shines upon the hour of our meeting
- *Westu Legolas hál!* Good health to you, Legolas!

Avoid using English words derived from Latin, Greek, etc

Be careful creating Elvish words or phrases (use a reference):

- *lârloth* Blood flower
- *Carhivren* Glittering House (Casablanca)
- *Lasvelui* Sweetleaf
- *Ceryn glam* Orcs' balls

Also, look for words you can use metaphorically:

- *Ceber* Wooden stake (erection)

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## The special words – Harry Potter

### Potterwords

- lists all the specialised words, with correct spelling and capitalisation
- gives advice on usage: for example, *Floo* is never used as a verb...

The screenshot shows the Potterwords website interface on a LiveJournal platform. The top navigation bar includes 'LIVEJOURNAL', 'FIND MORE', 'FRIENDS FEED', 'SHOP', 'POST NEW ENTRY', and a user profile for 'NINGLORETH'. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'POTTERWORDS - YOU ARE WATCHING'. The main content area features a header for 'Potterwords' with a small image of the website logo and a list of links: '[entries|archive|friends|userinfo]'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Potterwords III' dated 'Feb. 11th, 2007|09:09 pm'. The text of the entry reads: 'Welcome to the new and (hopefully) improved version of the list.' followed by a link 'potter\_words'. A 'Section listing' follows, containing the following items: Names, Verbs, Adjectives, The wizarding world, People, Light and Dark, Hogwarts, Shops and other businesses, Bureaucracy, Titles and awards, Wizarding Medicine, and Miscellaneous magical institutions.

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## The special words – Harlots

Fake 18<sup>th</sup> Century English (strange word order and occasional archaic word):

- “She too might take pity and bestow her favours upon you...”
- “Rescue me from your tedious man; he does babble so...”
- “Charlotte is a cockish moll, no doubt; but slaying her master?”
- “She is the wickedest harpy.”

*Cockish Wanton, forward  
Moll Whore*

*Francis Grose Dictionary of  
the Vulgar Tongue (1811)*



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## The special words – *Hawksmoor* (set c1670)

They must have used tall trees for **Levers**, *he continu'd*, squinting up at the **Stones**, or they discover'd the art of ordering **Engines** for the raising of **Weights**.

Some said **Merlyn** was the Father, *I replied*, and raised these **Stones** by the hidden **Mysteries** of **Magick**.

Sir **Chris**. laughed at this and sat upon the **Stone** in the inner **Circle**. There is an old rhyme, Nick, *says he*, which goes thus:

This, **Fame saies**, **Merlyn** to perfection brought  
But **Fame** said more than ever **Merlyn** wrought.

And he **lean'd** forward with a **Smile**.

**You are sitting on the Altar Stone**, *I said*; and he jumped up quickly like one bitten.

**Peter Ackroyd** *Hawksmoor*

A promotional image for a forest scene. In the foreground, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and a man with short brown hair are looking towards the camera. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right, wearing a dark, hooded jacket. The background is a dense forest with green foliage and some red leaves in the upper left corner. The text 'WriterConUK' is in orange and 'COVENTRY 2018' is in light blue.

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## Speech tags

- Use speech tags as sparingly as possible.
- Use 'said' about 90% of the time, because
  - 'readers don't notice it...'
  - it's neutral; it allows the *reader* to interpret the exact type of 'said' for themselves ('**writingandreading**')
- Use other saying-words sparingly.
- Use '-ly' adverbs ("he said, frostily") sparingly.



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**Speech tags – about 275 alternative ways of saying SAID compiled by Steven P. Wickstrom**

<http://www.spwickstrom.com/said/>

**accused, argued, barked, bellowed, chided, commanded, complained, corrected, countered, cursed, demanded, disagreed, exploded, fumed, gibed, growled, grumbled, hissed, hollered, howled, interrupted, muttered, nagged, objected, ordered, raged, ranted, retaliated, retorted, roared, screamed, scoffed, scolded, seethed, shouted, snapped, snarled, sneered, spluttered, swore, taunted, threatened, warned, yelled**

**badgered, bickered, chastised, clipped, clucked, dared, exasperated, goaded, huffed, insulted, sassed, scowled, shot, shrilled, stormed**



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**Speech tags – about 275 alternative ways of saying SAID**

**Only the words in orange sound ridiculous to me.**

***But* using many different saying words in a single passage makes a character's mood seem to jump about crazily.**





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“ Dialogue is ... **easy and fast to read**. It breaks up the page, adding white space and making your story look more attractive. (If you've ever seen someone flicking through a novel in a bookstore, there's a good chance they were looking to see how much narrative vs dialogue that novel contained.)

**Joanna Penn *9 Easily Preventable Mistakes Writers Make with Dialogue***

<https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2012/10/04/dialogue-mistakes/>

**Seriously? No, just write *good* dialogue!**



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## Moving the Story Forward

“...it's useful to remember the definition of dialogue as a verb: To 'take part in a conversation or discussion to resolve a problem'. In storytelling, great dialogue often follows the verbal definition. **It solves the story's problems, sketches in clues, builds anticipation, suspense and more.**

### **Bridget at Now Novel**

<https://www.nownovel.com/blog/writing-dialogue-examples/>

**In other words, it's a good way to show not tell.**

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## **Moving the Story forward – shift of perspective**

**Winter comes, and they stoke up the fire, and celebrate Yuletide, decking the rooms with holly, and inviting their neighbours to feast and make merry. January's hard, but the thaw comes and, eventually, Spring brings green shoots, and fragrant blossoms, and wobbly-legged lambs.**

...

**Hermione packs a basket with bread and cheese and a jug of ale, and covers it with a cloth. Draco's digging a ditch, which is back-breaking work, and he won't use magic, and won't let her help—she strokes her rounded belly, smiling.**

**"Let's go and feed your daddy."**

**Perspective = distant -> closer -> close-up (dialogue)**



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**Showing Epic Action [in close-up]**

**“Ford,” insisted Arthur, “I don’t know if this sounds like a silly question, but what am I doing here?”**

**“Well, you know that,” said Ford. “I rescued you from the Earth.”**

**“And what’s happened to the Earth?”**

**“Ah. It’s been demolished.”**

**“Has it,” said Arthur levelly. no “?” => levelness of tone**

**“Yes. It just boiled away into space.” = simultaneously SciFi and domestic = Hitchhiker in a nutshell**

**Douglas Adams *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy***

**Dialogue provides a précis of the action.**



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Showing sheep [in close-up]

Miss Maple: "The spade itself gave something away. What do you think of when you think of a spade?"

"A spade, of course," said Cloud.

"**Mouse-weed**," said Maude at once.

The others looked at her.

"Why **mouse-weed**?" asked Zora.

"Why not?" said Maude. "**I often think of mouse-weed...**"

"A vegetable garden," bleated Zora...

Miss Maple nodded, pleased. "Exactly. I was sure the spade meant something. **God's garden** – do you remember about that? It was a clue. **The vegetable garden where dead people are planted with a spade...**"

Leonie Swann *Three Bags Full*

**Dialogue shows us how sheep think**



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Showing a pioneering woman [in close-up]

Liebermann: "Could you... Can you...?"

Amelia: "Perform the **precipitin test**? I would have to reread some of Uhlenhuth's publications but, yes, the fundamental procedures are simple enough."

"What will you need?"

"Some syringes, some test tubes, some human blood, the stained clothing – and..." Amelia touched her lips and looking into the distance added: "A rabbit."

"I beg your pardon?"

Amelia turned to face Liebermann. **There wasn't a trace of humour in her expression.**

"A rabbit."

Frank Tallis *Vienna Blood*

**Dialogue shows us character**



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“**10 Keep It Short**

Try to keep each instance of dialogue to **one sentence**. When you get to the second sentence, it's likely your character has become an “explainer,” delivering expository information instead of acting as a dynamic, believable character.

**Ginny Wiehardt** *Top 12 Tips for Writing Dialogue*

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-tips-for-writing-dialogue-1277070>

**Seriously? No, just write *good* dialogue!**



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## More Showing not Telling

“ **Oblique dialogue** is where people never quite answer each other in a straight way. Where a question doesn't get a straightforward response. Where random connections are made. Where we never quite know where things are going.

As readers, we love that. It's dialogue to die for.

**Harry Bingham** *How to write dialogue in fiction*

*Dialogue in the novel: tricks, tools and examples*

<https://jerichowriters.com/writing-dialogue/>



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## A great example of 'oblique' dialogue

Lawyer: Let me re-phrase this. You sent my clients sixteen emails. In the first fifteen, you didn't raise any concerns.

Zuckerberg: Was that a question?

Lawyer: In the sixteenth email you raised concerns about the site's functionality. Were you leading them on for 6 weeks?

Zuckerberg: No.

Lawyer: Then why didn't you raise any of these concerns before?

Zuckerberg: **It's raining.**

Lawyer: I'm sorry?

Zuckerberg: **It just started raining. = an arrogant... person**

Lawyer: Mr. Zuckerberg do I have your full attention?

Zuckerberg: No.

*The Social Network*

A promotional image for a forest scene. In the foreground, a woman with long, wavy brown hair and a man with short brown hair are looking towards the camera. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right, wearing a dark jacket with a hood. The background is a dense forest with green foliage and some red leaves in the upper left corner. The text 'WriterConUK' is in red and 'COVENTRY 2018' is in white, both in a serif font.

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## Tone

“

Written dialogue (as opposed to spoken conversation) is challenging in part because **the reader does not have auditory clues for understanding tone**. The subtle shades of spoken conversation have to be shaded in using descriptive language.

**Bridget at Now Novel *Writing dialogue: 7 examples of dialogues that work***

<https://www.nownovel.com/blog/writing-dialogue-examples/>



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**Tone – is this threatening?**

**'Where's your gun, your pistol?'**

**'In my bag, in the car.' She felt his hand slip from her arm to her hip and rest there and she said, 'You know you don't have a chance of making it. Guards are out here already, they'll stop the car.'**

**'They're off in the cane by now chasing Cubans.'**

**His tone was quiet, unhurried, and it surprised her.**

**'I timed it to slip between the cracks, you might say. I was even gonna blow the whistle myself if I had to...'**

**She felt his hand move down her thigh, fingertips brushing her pantyhose, the way her skirt was pushed up.**

**Elmore Leonard *Out of Sight***

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**Tone – it's a comedy thriller; context makes it erotic**



**'Gentleman' Jack Foley George Clooney  
Karen Sisco Jennifer Lopez**



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**Telling *not* Showing – in a good way**

**Hartright: "You won't trust me?"**

**Catherick: "No."**

**"You are afraid of Sir Percival Glyde?"**

**"Am I?"**

**Her colour was rising, and her hands were at work again smoothing her gown. I pressed the point farther home, I went on without allowing her a moment of delay.**

**"Sir Percival has a high position..."**

**Walter Hartright's dialogue with Mrs Catherick  
Wilkie Collins *The Woman in White***

**tells,  
does  
not  
show,  
lack of  
delay**

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## Character interaction

Dialogue shows a *special kind* of character interaction, which seems to give the reader *direct access*, including the characters'

- 'witty banter'
- cries of ecstasy ;-)



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## **Character interaction**

**“Fuck,” said Draco. “*Fuck!*” And then, more accurately, “I’m totally *fucked*.”**

**“I suppose you mean that metaphorically as well as literally,” said Granger.**

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**Character interaction – Dracula  
tries to seduce a historian...**

*Come with me and I will give you knowledge for ten thousand lifetimes.*

**I didn't know, still, how I could understand him...**

*I have waited a long time for a scholar of your gifts.*

**The voice was soft now and infinitely dangerous. We stood in a darkness that seemed to flood us from that dark figure.**

*Come with me of your own volition.*

**Elizabeth Kostova *The Historian***







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## Character interaction – describing emotions

“I do not understand you,” said Dorothea, **startled and anxious.**

“I merely mean,” said Will, **in an offhand way,** “that the Germans have taken the lead in historical inquiries...”

**Will only thought of giving a good pinch that would annihilate that vaunted laboriousness and was unable to imagine the mode in which Dorothea would be wounded...**

**Poor Dorothea felt a pang at the thought that her husband's life might be void...**

**George Eliot *Middlemarch***

**Almost a second, subconscious dialogue...**



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**If you try Googling 'theory of dialogue' on your **work** computer, you'll probably get something like this...**

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## THEORY OF DIALOGUE

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### THEORY OF DIALOGUE

#### WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

Dialogue is about a diverse group of people finding a common sense or understanding about things. This leads to moving forward together in a common direction, each understanding their part in what is being done, and contributing to what may be needed in a willing and intelligent way.

#### WHY DIALOGUE?

The more diverse the interests of group (many different stakeholders), the more cultural differences there are (many different assumptions and beliefs), and the greater the hierarchical levels (power differences) the less likely it is that a common understanding will be realised, and the more essential it is to use dialogue to succeed.

### THEORY OF DIALOGUE



Peter Garrett



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**In fact, the first definition of 'dialogue' in the *Collins Online Dictionary* is**

“**1. Dialogue is communication or discussion between people or groups of people such as governments or political parties.**

***People of all social standings should be given equal opportunities for dialogue.***

***They have begun dialogues to promote better understanding between both communities.***

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com>

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## Polyphony/Dialogism

“...the chief characteristic [of Dostoevsky's writing] is 'a *plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices*'.

His major characters are ... 'not only *objects* of authorial discourse but also *subjects* of their own ... discourse.'

from *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*

Mikhail Bakhtin  
1895 – 1975



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## Polyphony/Dialogism

Bakhtin is saying that

- in a traditional novel, the novelist has *power*, reduces his characters to objects and manipulates them to convey his message
- in a dialogic novel, the characters have *power* – every character has agency, follows his/her own agenda and, together, they weave the story without the author's interference.

**characters have rights**

**Mikhail Bakhtin**  
1895 – 1975





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**We see the influence of Bakhtin's ideas when fans criticise writers for**

- **creating characters without sufficient agency**
- **creating characters who (are made to) think, say, or do 'bad' things, characters who don't have (or aren't given) a 'redemption arc', characters who are simply (used as) victims, characters who are killed off...**

**For *disprivileging* characters.**



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## BUT

- **Even if all characters *are* fully realised and have full agency, some are going to fail. The moral of a story, if there is one, must lie in the overall pattern (*polyphony*) made by the characters as each pursues his or her own goals, *not in every character's own story arc.***

**agency ≠ happy ending**

- **Films, TV programmes, even books, typically follow an established structure, and it can be very uncomfortable for the viewer/reader if they don't conform.**



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DISAPPOINTED

BY A TV SERIES?  
BOOK? OR FILM?



if you still love your fandom

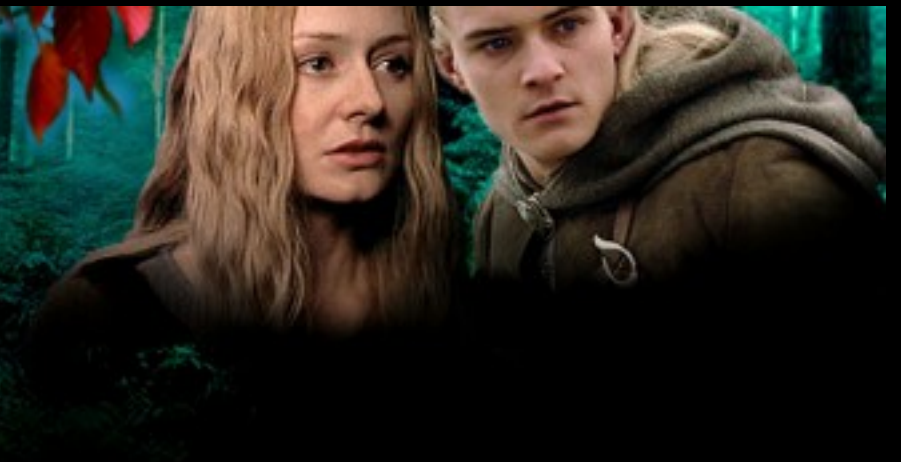
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and have the story <sup>👑</sup>YOUR way

**And that's one of the reasons we read and write fanfics – to put things right...**

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**The End!**