

Writing Workshop: Dialogue

Materials:

- ✓ Class set of “Chapter 1” from *Nothing but Trouble after Midnight (NBTAM)*. (Another chapter may be substituted for this exercise.)
- ✓ Copy of “Conversational Cards” (Copy on cardstock and cut into cards.)
- ✓ Copies of “Dialogue Handout”
- ✓ Class set of “Dialogue Rules”

Objective:

Students will use “Chapter 1” of *NBTAM* as a model for creating dialogue for their own short story.

Activities:

1. Briefly introduce the novel and the author.
2. Go over the definition of dialogue: Dialogue is the conversation between characters.
3. Read and discuss “Chapter 1” of *NBTAM*.
4. Divide students into pairs and distribute one conversational card to each pair.
5. Allow students to discuss the topic for one minute. Then they will record the conversation on the handout.
6. The students will use the conversation in their short story, but they have to place the conversation in one of the following settings:
 - deserted island
 - pirate ship
 - waiting in line at an amusement park
 - the mall
 - an expensive restaurant
 - a playground
 - during a rock concert
 - a wedding reception
 - a birthday party

Assessment:

Depending on the grade level, assign a length for the short story.

-CONVERSATIONAL CARDS-

Are you a morning or night person?	What is your favorite holiday?	What do you want to be when you grow up?
What's the best costume you have ever worn?	What's your favorite breakfast food?	Are you afraid of heights?
If you could have a super power, what would it be?	What's your favorite season?	What did you have for lunch yesterday?
What's your favorite book— or genre of fiction?	If you could live in any home on a television series, what would it be?	What is your favorite school supply?
If you had to be named after one of the 50 states, what name would you choose?	What color do you feel like today?	What's the longest you ever waited in line?
What's the sickest you've ever been?	What's your favorite TV commercial?	Which talent would you prefer—singing, dancing, or drawing?
What's your favorite breakfast food?	When was the last time you traveled out of state? (If never, then where do you want to go?)	What's your favorite subject in school?

Names: _____

Dialogue Handout

Speaker #1:

Speaker #2:

Speaker #1:

Speaker #2:

Speaker #1:

Speaker #2:

Speaker #1:

Speaker #2:

Dialogue Rules

Dialogue is the conversation between characters, and those spoken words go inside the quotation marks.

Rule #1: Place a comma between the dialogue and the words used to identify the speaker. (The words used to identify the speaker are called the tag line.)

“No,” I chided back.

“Listen, it’s a long story, Clyde,” I said.

Rule #2: When a tag line interrupts the sentence, it should be set off by commas.

“So, are you,” I paused before I repeated his word, “flattered?”

Rule #3: Periods and commas go inside the quotation marks. Other marks of punctuation—exclamation point, question mark, dashes, semicolons—go inside the quotation marks if they pertain to the dialogue.

“Hey!” he yelled, cupping his hands around his mouth and shouting in every direction.

“So, how did it end?”

“But—” I tried.

Rule #4: For interior monologues (thoughts inside the narrator’s head), you don’t use quotation marks but italics.

Yeah, I thought, At least I dated him once.