Write Right Now! With PeggySue Wells

Dynamic Dialog

Dialog economically

- Moves the story forward ("Help me, Obi Won Kenobi, you're my only hope.)
- Reveals crucial plot points ("Houston, we have a problem.")
- Shows something vital about a character ("Bah, humbug.")

Dialog shows a character's education, bias, concerns, moods, motivation.

> "I know hurryin' is against your nature, but you might want to pick up the pace before that storm rolls in."
>
> "Whose side are you on?"

"Get your stinking paws off me, you dirty ape."

"You is kind, you is smart, you is important."

Avoid repetition.

The exception is personality tags a character becomes known for.

- Dinner and a show
- I am Groot.
- Spider-sense tingling
- I have a bad feeling about this.
- Why is all the rum gone?
- Live long and prosper.

In dialog Do:

- Argue: "You didn't do your homework on that last assignment you gave me."
  Corbin's jaw tightened. "Things aren't always what they seem. You know that."

- Create suspense: "What are you doing here?"

- Have opposites: Polite evil character, Cynical hero: "Go ahead, make my day."

- Show - Don't Tell: Putting his hand to the back of his head he found a large goose egg. "Your aim is improving."

- Share fresh info: "Hugo is a category five hurricane."

- Enter late, leave early: Stopping outside the hotel, Michael stared at the stars. "Think she'll do something better with her life?"
  Bryce shrugged. "Well, I'd say that's up to her." He slapped Michael on the back. "But you gave her the option."

- Include action and action beats: Michael put a finger to his lips. Listening, he heard the pounding of footsteps above followed by shouts. "They'll be back soon." He looked at Claire's confused friend. "Drag that guard in here."

- Format properly: Indent each time the speaker changes.
  Bryce finally broke the silence. "You okay?"
  "She probably wasn't any older than Marissa."

"Probably not."
"She should be playing with dolls."
"Or picking on her older brother's best friend."

- Practice aloud: Read dialog aloud to hear what works and what needs changed

Don't:

- Info dump
- Say the obvious
- Repeat
- Say too much

Use dialog tags sparingly:

"Never use a verb other than 'said' to carry dialogue. The line of dialogue belongs to the character; the verb is the writer sticking his nose in. But 'said' is far less intrusive than 'grumbled,' 'gasped,' 'cautioned,' 'lied.'" ~ Elmore Leonard, Screenwriter

Put dialog on a diet: Remove anything not needed.

Banned dialog words:

- Oh,
- Yeah
- Hello
- Good-bye
- Okay
- Well
- Er, uh, Um

What to do with profanity and sex: How to make a character believable without offending your reader or publisher

Dialog is the dessert of great stories. Often a reader's favorite part, we quote great dialog for generations.

Gives the illusion of reality without the annoying quirks.

Remove the cream-filled twinkies!

Interview and Conversation Prompts https://bit.ly/2LPvv06

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