

## DIALOGUE BASICS

- Dialogue is used to move the story along.
- Dialogue can show, not tell.
- Dialogue reveals character.

“I hate you, and I’m going to throw this banana at your face!” yelled Mr. Kaye.

“You will never throw your fruit at us,” challenged the classroom of antsy middle schoolers.

“I’ll do what I want! This is my room. I make the rules. Try to stop me. Hahaha.”

The students weren’t intimidated; deep down they knew Mr. Kaye was hungry and wouldn’t waste his food on them.

## DIALOGUE “RULES”

1. Conversations draw readers into the action, and get your audience INVOLVED in the story. You want your readers actively participating.
2. Indent EVERY time someone new speaks (or when conversation switches perspective).
3. Quotes (“quotation marks”) go around spoken words ONLY.
4. Punctuation ( , ? ! ) goes INSIDE of quotation marks.
5. Punctuation at end of complete sentence.
6. Sometimes you need an identifying tag/label, sometimes you don’t. Mix it up. Often times your audience can tell who is speaking by the context or tone. Experiment using identifying tags/labels at beginning *and* ends of sentences. Sometimes even in the middle. Vary the words you use to identify the speaker and how they communicate.
7. Strive for a balance/mixture of narrative and dialogue.
8. Well-written dialogue is honest, real, and natural—not forced and canned. This isn’t easy; it takes time to experiment and craft.

HW: Write (1) page of balanced narrative & dialogue. Create your own scenario. Be creative. Your writing sample must be typed (size 12, single spaced) and depict a continuous, focused “scene”—opposed to fragmented bits of conversation.