

**What dialogue is *not*:**

**What dialogue *is*:**

**Why should we allow our characters to speak? What is gained?**

**Check your dialogue:**

1. Do you have any dialogue in the piece you're writing? Why or why not?

2. Does my dialogue serve a purpose?

3. Does my dialogue sound like speech, or does it sound written?

4. Does my dialogue sound like the person speaking?

5. Have I included small gestures, actions, and body language as well we speech?

6. Is my exchange the right length—not drawn out or cut short?

7. Do I have enough but not too many taglines?

8. Have I varied the position of my taglines—beginning, middle, end of the sentence?

9. Have I overused modifiers in my dialogue? If so, could some of them be replaced with *said*?

10. Have I overused direct address?

11. Have I made use of region, class, group, and/or profession-specific language, if appropriate?

12. If I used jargon or dialect, is it not overdone?

13. Have I written anything in my dialogue the character would already know?

14. Have I removed any meaningless exchanges?

15. Does my dialogue have a good back-and-forth between speakers?

16. Does my dialogue reveal important information about the character's personality, beliefs, level of education, etc.?

17. Do my characters have different voices?

18. Have I correctly used quotation marks and appropriate punctuation to offset my dialogue?

19. Have I started a new paragraph when changing speakers?

20. Have I read my dialogue aloud? Did it sound like real and not written speech?

**Notes:**