

Dialogue toolkit

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To create dialogue that sounds real, reflects character and moves action forwards you might want to

N/R	Y1/2 As in N/R plus:	Y3/4 As in Y1/2 plus:	Y5/6 As in Y3/4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use puppets and make up funny voices when playing • role-play different characters • Read aloud using different voices for characters • Discuss ‘What did the character say?’, ‘why’ and model ‘How?’ • On story maps, draw simple speech inside speech bubbles • Notice speech marks in shared reading; • When the sound is turned down in films, discuss what they might be saying • Use wordless picture books and discuss what a character might say. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose and decide how a character feels, thinks or behaves and show this through what they say, <i>e.g. ‘I’m scared!’</i> • Use powerful speech verbs – <i>hissed, squealed, roared, whispered</i> • Use said plus an adverb – <i>he said nervously</i> <p>And a few speech punctuation rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write what is said, starting with a capital letter, and the punctuation inside a speech bubble • Burst the bubble to leave speech marks round what is said • Start a new line for each speaker • Start the spoken words with a capital letter • If the sentence ends with speech, put a . or ! or ? inside the speech marks. If the sentence continues end the speech with a comma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only a few exchanges • Tag on what a character is doing while speaking, using a ‘stage direction’ – <i>‘No,’ he hissed, <u>shaking his head.</u></i> • Use a speech sandwich, <i>e.g. ‘Hello,’ said John, waving to his friend. Then character B replies, ‘Run for it’, squealed Tim.</i> • Use dialogue to suggest how a character feels, thinks or what they are like and to move the action forwards • Use quirky expressions, <i>e.g. “Crazy cats,” she muttered.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have characters discuss other characters and reflect on events • Add to the speech sandwich by adding in the listener’s reaction, <i>e.g. ‘Hello,’ said John, waving to his friend. Tim gasped.</i> • Also add in something else that is needed to keep the action moving forwards, <i>e.g. ‘Hello,’ said John, waving to his friend. Tim gasped. Coming down the road was an elephant.</i> • Complete with what the listener says, <i>e.g. ‘Hello,’ said John, waving to his friend. Tim gasped. Coming down the road was an elephant. ‘Run for it!’ squealed Tim.</i> • Put the speaker before or after what is said or in between, <i>e.g. Sam said, “So, let’s go.” “So, let’s go,” said Sam. “So,” said Sam, “Let’s go.”</i>

Useful ideas for teaching dialogue – always co-construct the toolkit with the class



Model all aspects of the toolkit and display examples on washing lines.

N/R	Y1/2 As in N/R plus:	Y3/4 As in Y1/2 plus:	Y5/6 As in Y3/4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide role-play spaces, costumes, hats and objects/toys to encourage role-play and re-enacting of stories • Provide puppets and play with children • Use picture books and big books – read aloud together with expression, emphasising who says what and how – discuss how characters feel and how we know • Read together using voices to match how a character feels • Discuss what character might be thinking and what they might do or say next • Use Post-its in Big Books or on screen to add in dialogue • Capture what children say on laminated speech bubbles & provide for play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on dialogue in reading and work out simple rules • Display dialogue rules and examples on washing lines and on support cards • Rehearse dialogue in shared writing but keep it limited • Draw cartoons with speech bubbles for stories • Practice turning speech bubbles into dialogue • Use Post-its to innovate on speech verbs, adding in adverbs or changing what is said • Change a character’s personality and then alter what they say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add ideas to class dialogue rules by reading quality literature, display, model in shared writing and practise • Use paired drama to develop what is said and how it is said with expression mirroring how a character feels plus a simple action, e.g. <i>pointing at the chair</i> • Model in pairs what character A says + the reply from character B; then add in stage directions for both • Collect expressions from books but also from listening in to other people speaking • Make lists of idioms and everyday expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice in reading how other characters or the author, reflect on a main character • In drama, use the game ‘gossip’ or ‘spies’ to develop the idea of other characters commenting on a key character • Identify in reading and model in shared writing how the listener reacts; use drama to explore how reactions can be ‘shown’; • Explore dialogue in quality books and add extra ideas to the class dialogue rules and tips • Innovate on extracts of dialogue from novels, using same style as author • Innovate from novels by changing how a character feels, using ‘show not tell’ and altering what they say – can a partner guess how your character feels?