

School of Design & Media
DM1374

Game Story Creation

Week **13**

Dialogue

Dialogue

Dialogue



<https://youtu.be/WJotVinhXJ4>

Dialogue

Dialogue

/ˈdɪəlɒɡ/

1. A conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, film or video games.



Dialogue

Dialogue



Dialogue

Dialogue



Dialogue

Introduction

- In real life, people often
 - Speak over one another
 - Jump from one topic to another without warning
 - Use filler words (eg. um, ah, well, you know, etc.)
- **Writing dialogue isn't about replicating a real-life conversation, it's about giving an impression of it**



Dialogue

Tips to Writing Dialogue

- Add Conflict
- Give Purpose
- Flow
- Be Concise
- Difference Between Characters
- Avoid the Obvious
- Use Subtext
- Understatement and Irony
- Punctuation

Writing Dialogue

Add Conflict

- Pleasant conversations can sound mundane and boring
- Give the characters **conflicting goals**
- Example:
 - Different choice of food
 - Different roads to take
 - Different views on topics, etc.



Writing Dialogue

Give Purpose

- To **Drive the Story Forward**
 - Conversations in the real world often have little or no point to them
 - Dialogue have **purpose** when
 - if removed, story does not make sense
 - it increases the suspense
 - it changes character(s)'s situation, for better or worse
 - it strengthen/weaken character(s)'s resolve/goal

Writing Dialogue

Give Purpose

- Should **NOT be an information dump**

very cheesy

- Example:

- Villain explains his plan in great length
- Scientist reveals how his ultimate weapon works, etc.



- Dialogue is not the only tool to reveal information
Use combination of dialogue and actions

Want to introduce it naturally

Writing Dialogue

Flow

- Conversations **should not sound like a ping-pong game**
- Vary **Length of Lines**
 - Overly consistent lines sound like a ping-pong game
 - Mix long sentences with short remarks, along with gestures

silence can also be a form of communication

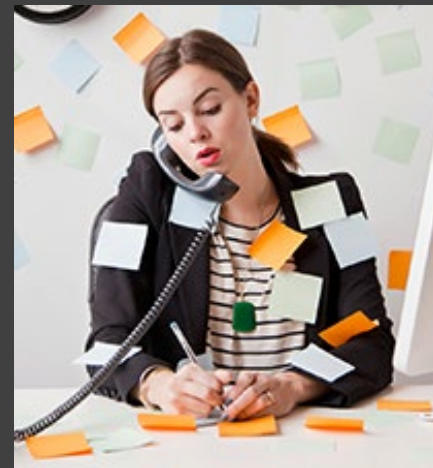


Writing Dialogue

Flow

→ can sometimes help to convey relationship of characters in the scene

- **Multitask**: talk and do something at the same time
 - It's rare for people to talk and do nothing else
 - To keep it authentic, mention what the characters are doing, even if the actions may seem insignificant
 - Example:
 - Sipping tea
 - Clearing throat
 - Watching the world go by, etc.



Writing Dialogue

Flow

- **Pause** the conversation when required
 - Freeze the exchange with
 - Description of the surroundings to enhance the mood
 - Show what one of the characters is thinking
 - Example:
 - Talk about the rain getting heavier as relationship between characters worsen
 - Express the protagonist's empathy towards the victims of a disaster

Writing Dialogue

Be Concise

- In reality, many people tend to add in many empty words to describe what they mean
- Concise dialogue are **more gripping and less confusing**
- Less chit-chat
- Don't write in complete, grammatical sentences

Writing Dialogue

Difference Between Characters

- **Every character is unique**, thinking and acting in their own individual way



Writing Dialogue

Difference Between Characters

- Direct relation with **personality traits**
 - Sanguine may sound more boastful
 - Choleric may sound more assertive
 - Melancholic may be more reserved and rarely speak up
 - Phlegmatic may sound more caring and patient

build up personality traits
↳ reflect in dialogue

Writing Dialogue

Difference Between Characters

- Character's voice and vocabulary should fit the **sociological** aspect of their character

Example:

- Highly educated character may use fancier words
- Thug may use swear words
- Artist may use more descriptive words

Writing Dialogue

Difference Between Characters

- **Characters interact differently** with different characters
 - In real life, people speak differently, depending on who they are talking to
 - Example:
 - Man is fierce to his rivals but sweet to his children
 - Student is arrogant with his classmates but reserved with teachers
- Dialogue helps demonstrate the relationships between different characters

Writing Dialogue

Avoid the Obvious

- Characters should not provide information that the characters themselves should already know

Example:

- Wife tell husband to fetch their son from school while stating the exact name and location of the school
- Villain slashes Hero and tells him he is bleeding, etc.

Writing Dialogue

Avoid the Obvious

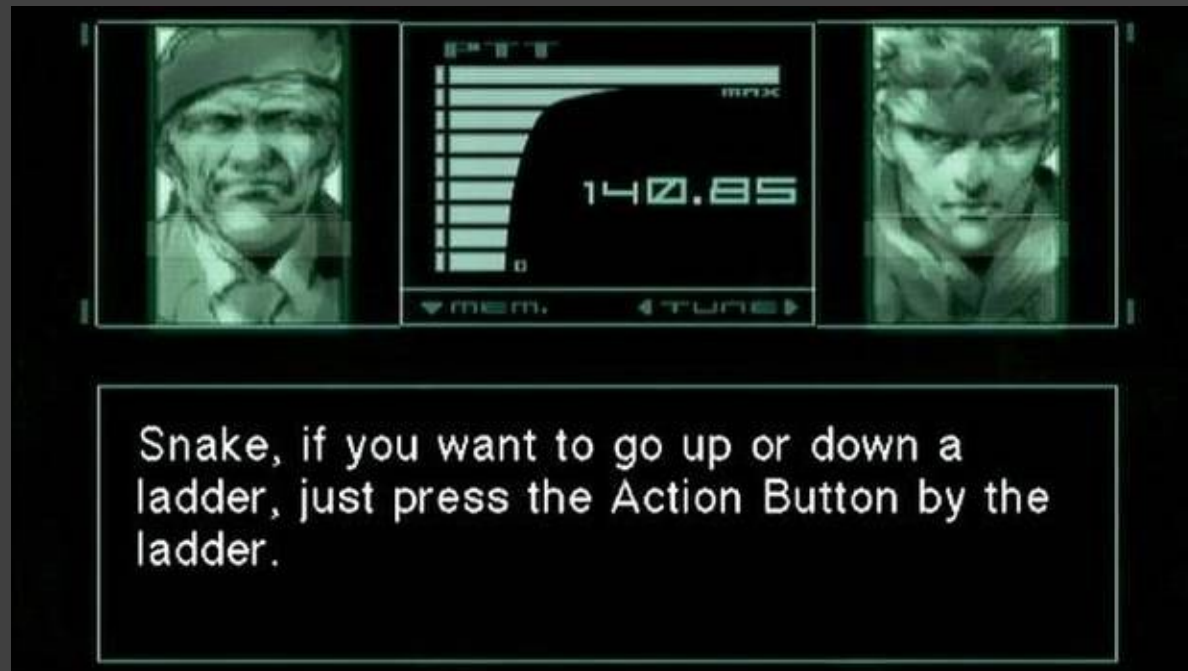
- **Rephrase lines** to make them fresh and interesting
- Say the exact opposite to what they really think



Writing Dialogue

Avoid the Obvious

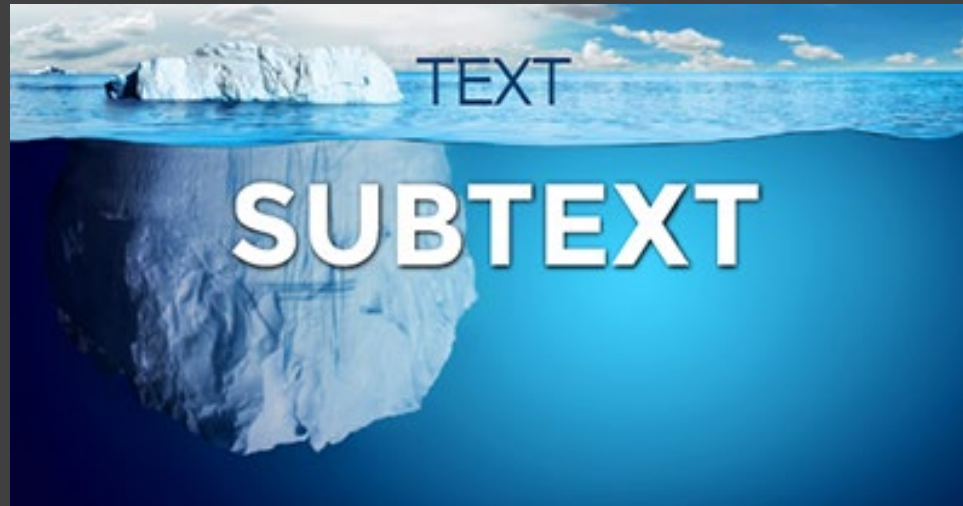
- In video games, there are often exceptions to this when stating game objectives or controls



Writing Dialogue

Use Subtext

- **Subtext:** *dramatic tool* — *audience know more than character*
 - An **underlying** and often distinct theme in a piece of writing or conversation



Writing Dialogue

Use Subtext

- Characters talk about one thing but are actually talking about something else

Example:

- Couple disagree on what to have for dinner when they truly believe they don't get along
- Man overreacting about being given the wrong change when he truly feels that he has been treated unfairly at work

can express context for audience

Writing Dialogue

Understatement and Irony

- **Understatement**

- The presentation of something as being smaller or less good or important than it really is



Writing Dialogue

Understatement and Irony

- **Irony**

- The expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the **opposite**, typically for humorous or emphatic effect



opposite of what
it means

Writing Dialogue

Understatement and Irony

- Often used for comedic effect
- Make characters sound polite or humble



Writing Dialogue

Punctuation

- **Wrong punctuation can make the dialogue/script confusing**
- Place dialogue within quotation marks
- Start a new paragraph for a new speaker
- Use dashes (-) to indicate a character's speech being cut off
- Use ellipses (...) to indicate a character's words trailing off

Writing Dialogue

Punctuation

- Example:

"Hey," said Peter. "How's it going?"

"Can't complain," said Mary. "Well, I could, but nobody listens to a word I say."

"I'm just on my way to grab a coffee so-"

"Yes, Peter, I'd love to join you!"

Peter didn't wish for Mary to tag along but he was too polite to refuse. "Yeah sure," he said as he puts his hands in his pockets. "Let's go..."

Writing Dialogue

References:

Dialogue in Film: How Should Characters Talk?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpK5dXw0WzI>

Writing Dialogue

Exercise

Objective:

Write interesting scenes that relate information to the reader.

Scenario:

Co-workers Clark and Diana are meeting at a cafe after work to discuss about a colleague, Bruce, who was arrested by the police at work that afternoon.

Writing Dialogue

Exercise

Using the given scenario, write the scene 3 times, spending **no more than 10 minutes** on each scene:

Scene 1

Intentionally write the scene as an **information dump**, where both characters tell each other what both already know.

Writing Dialogue

Exercise

Using the given scenario, write the scene 3 times, spending **no more than 10 minutes** on each scene:

Scene 2

Rewrite the scene, with both characters having different pieces of information and comparing them to deduce what happened.

Writing Dialogue

Exercise

Using the given scenario, write the scene 3 times, spending **no more than 10 minutes** on each scene:

Scene 3

Write the scene again as an argument, where the facts are aligned but both characters have opposing view of Bruce's innocence.

Writing Dialogue

Exercise

Compare the scenes and think about the strengths and weaknesses of each piece of writing.