

Dialogue

Definition of Dialogue

A dialogue is a literary technique in which writers employ two or more characters to be engaged in conversation with one another. In literature, it is a conversational passage, or a spoken or written exchange of conversation in a group, or between two persons directed towards a particular subject. The use of dialogues can be seen back in classical literature, especially in Plato's *Republic*. Several other philosophers also used this technique for rhetorical and argumentative purposes. Generally, it makes a literary work enjoyable and lively.

Types of Dialogue

There are two types of dialogue in literature:

Inner Dialogue – In inner dialogue, the characters speak to themselves and reveal their personalities. To use inner dialogue, writers employ literary techniques like [stream of consciousness](#) or dramatic [monologue](#). We often find such dialogues in the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner.

Outer Dialogue – Outer dialogue is a simple conversation between two characters, used in almost all types of fictional works.

Examples of Dialogue in Literature

Let us see how famous writers have used dialogues for resonance and meaning in their works:

Example #1: *Wuthering Heights* (By Emily Bronte)

“Now he is here,” I exclaimed. “For Heaven’s sake, hurry down! Do be quick; and stay among the trees till he is fairly in.”

“I must go, Cathy,” said Heathcliff, seeking to extricate himself from his companion’s arms. “I won’t stray five yards from your window...”

“For one hour,” he pleaded earnestly.

“Not for one minute,” she replied.

“I must—Linton will be up immediately,” persisted the intruder.

Miss Bronte has employed surprises, opposition, and reversals in this dialogue like *will-it-happen, when he says, “But, if I live, I’ll see you ...”* She has inserted these expressions in order to develop [conflict](#) in the plot.

Example #2: *Crime and Punishment* (By Fyodor Dostoevsky)

“But who did he tell it to? You and me?”

“And Porfiry.”

“What does it matter?”

“And, by the way, do you have any influence over them, his mother and sister? Tell them to be more careful with him today ...”

“They’ll get on all right!” Razumikhin answered reluctantly.

“Why is he so set against this Luzhin? A man with money and she doesn’t dislike him ...

“But what business is it of yours?” Razumikhin cried with annoyance.

In this excerpt, notice the use of conflict, emotions, information, conflict, reversal, and opposition flowing by. The ideas and information are expressed with perfect timing, but here an important point is that the characters are not responding with a definite answer. This is a beautiful piece of dialogue

Example #3: *A Dialogue Between Caliban and Ariel* (By John Fuller)

Cal. “Have you no visions that you cannot name?”

Ar. “A picture should extend beyond its frame,
There being no limitation
To bright reality:
For all their declaration
And complexity,
Words cannot see.”

Fuller has written this poem in the dialogue form. Two characters, Caliban and Ariel, are conversing, revealing the conflict, as Caliban asks questions, and Ariel gives answers that make the poem alive and interesting.

Example #4: *Pride and Prejudice* (By Jane Austen)

“Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune;
four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!”

“How so? How can it affect them?”

“My dear Mr. Bennet, “replied his wife, “how can you be so
tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one
of them...”

My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty,
but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now...she ought
to give over thinking of her own beauty.”

Austen explores the characters in her novels through dialogue. Likewise, in this conversation, the author unfolds Mrs. Bennet’s [character](#) as being stupid and worthless. Mr. Bennet makes fun of her wife, and this dialogue sums up their relationship and gives hints about their personalities.

Function of Dialogue

The use of dialogue is prevalent in [fiction](#), but this technique can also be found in poetry, non-fiction, films, and [drama](#). The dialogue has several purposes, such as advancing the plot of a [narrative](#), and revealing the characters that cannot be understood otherwise. Further, it presents an [exposition](#) of the background or past events, and creates the tone of a narrative. Its usage can also be seen in modern literary works, where it colors the personalities of the characters, creates a conflict, highlights the [vernacular](#), and moves the storyline forward. Moreover, dialogue makes a literary piece interesting and alive, and gives enjoyable experience to the readers.