Using Dialogue to Advance Action and Develop Characters

Using Dialogue

Dialogue is a conversation or speech that is written down as part of a piece of narrative text.

It is usually between two or more people...

...and it can be really useful when describing characters or advancing a story's plot.

Punctuating Speech

When writing dialogue, it's important that you punctuate the speech correctly.

"We've gone the wrong way… again," sighed Borys, who was fed up of flying around in circles.

"No we haven't!" shouted Beryl over the buzz of hundreds of pairs of beating wings. "Queen Betty knows the way and, anyway, I'm sure that we've not seen this patch of flowers before."

" "

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Using Dialogue to Advance the Action

"It's not haunted," sighed Rosie, with one hand resting against the rotten door. It creaked slightly; James jumped. Rosie rolled her eyes at the sight of her friend being scared by a building and pushed the heavy door open.

"Rosie? What is it? What can you see?" James said, frantically peering around. Rosie was shaking and pointing to a space just in front of her. "There... there...there's...a..."

"I don't like it," said James, "it's giving me a weird feeling."

"What? Where? Rosie, there's nothing there. You're pointing at an empty space. Stop it, please; you're scaring me," James begged.

"It's fine, there's nothing he..."

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Using Dialogue to Create Tension

Dialogue can really help to create tension within a text.
Having two or more characters in danger can make
great dialogue for your reader.

"Jolly? We've got less than five seconds
before we're going to collapse!" yelled Rob.

Joyce looked behind her at the crumbling walls.
"There's not enough time to get out!"

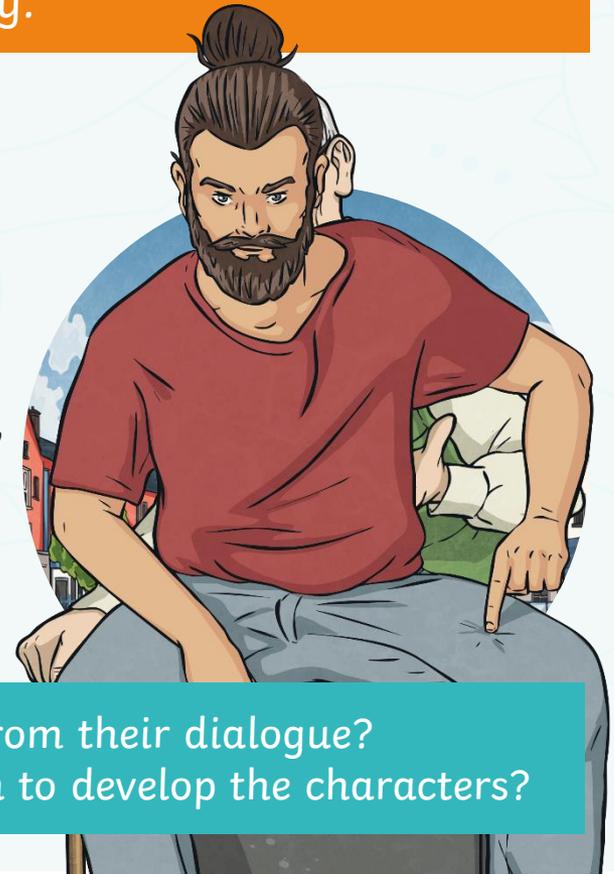"We've got to try. If we don't,
we'll be trapped in here for sure."

How has the dialogue helped to create tension?
Would the writing be as tense without any dialogue?

Using Dialogue to Develop Characters

"Great transport," said an older gentleman while's waiting for the bus. "What fine weather I've 'ad, I tell ya. I've been hoping all day on one of 'em hover fings. Now, that's fine transport!"

"You what?" exclaimed a second man, who also happened to be waiting. "What is you on about? It's well 'ot and I ain't likin' it."

"I do beg your pardon; it's just that I rarely manage to leave the house these days and I find a spot of sunshine to be most beneficial.

beneath this charming infrastructure.

Recap

Dialogue can be really useful when advancing the action and developing characters in your writing.

Using Dialogue to Advance the Action
Use your characters' dialogue to tell the story.
Remember to have your characters talk about the events otherwise the plot will not advance.

Using Dialogue to Create Tension
Use the dialogue between your characters to create tension.
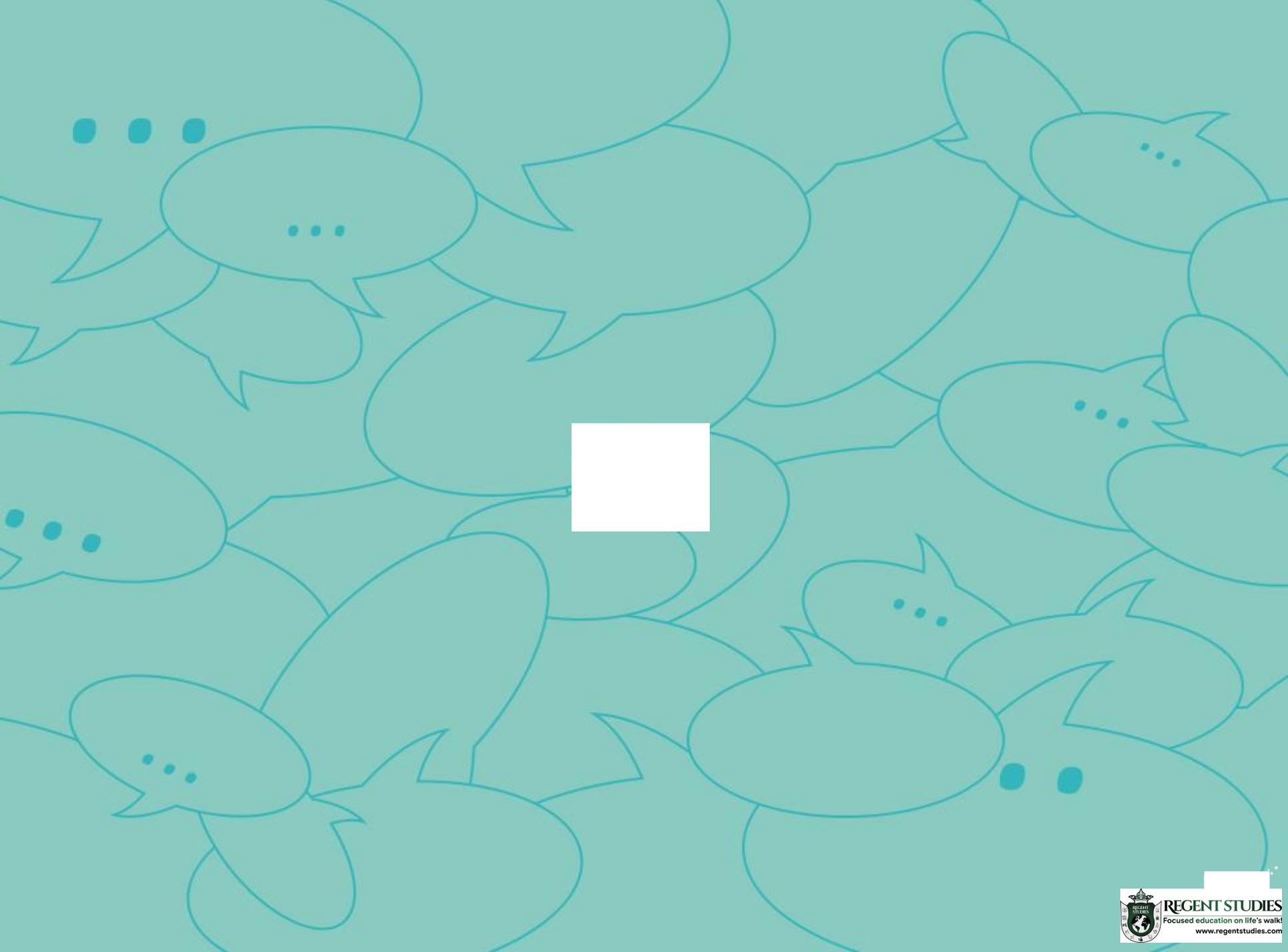Try making them shout or stutter to give the impression of urgency or fear.

Using Dialogue to Develop Characters
Use the way that your character speaks and their choice of words to show your reader more about their personality, attitude and viewpoint.
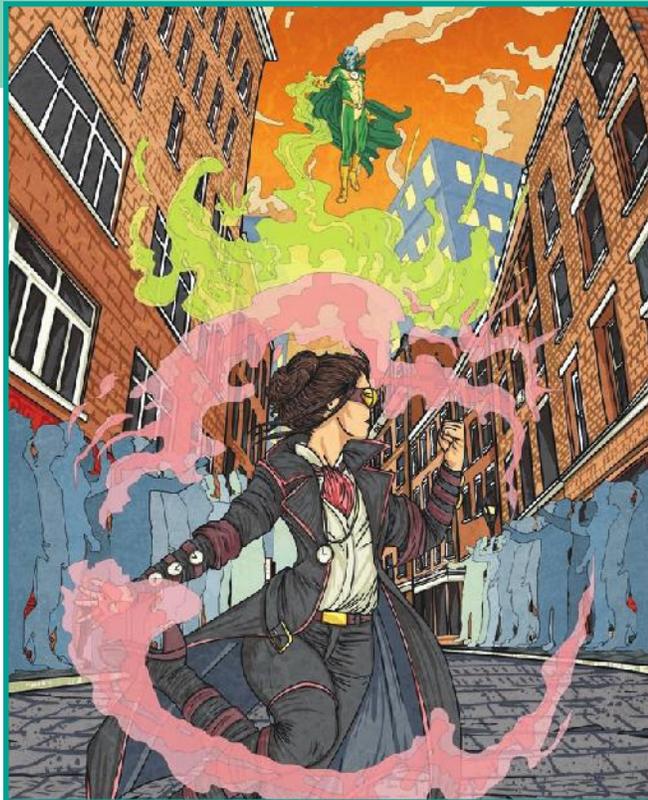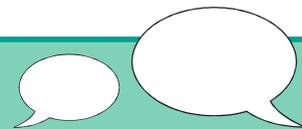
Using Dialogue to Advance the Action

Dialogue can be really useful when advancing the plot of a story.
Use your characters' speech to describe what is happening.

Look at this picture of two
dueling superheroes.
Make some notes about what is happening.

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Imagine that your reader can't see the picture.
Write some dialogue between the characters that describes what is happening.
Remember to include the correct speech punctuation.

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Using Dialogue to Create Tension

Dialogue can be really useful when creating tension. Use the way your characters talk to convey urgency, fear and panic. Don't give everything away in the first sentence; you want to keep your reader wanting to know more.

Name two characters onboard the ship:

-
-

What is going wrong?

Write some dialogue between your two characters. Try to use what they're saying to create tension by making your reader concerned for their safety.

Remember to include the correct speech punctuation.

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Using Dialogue to Develop Characters

Dialogue can be really useful when describing characters. The way that somebody talks and the words they choose to use can tell you a lot about their character.

Make notes about the characters' personalities in the boxes below.

Name:

Name:

Write some dialogue between the two characters. Think carefully about the way that each character speaks and use the dialogue to describe their personalities.
Remember to include the correct speech punctuation.