

# Dialogue Activity

## Part A

Reread p. 8-9 'Christopher's House'. You'll notice lots of speech sentences on these pages.

In this activity, you will be exploring how dialogue is used effectively.

**Task 1:** Some of the speech sentences are simply the speech itself plus the reporting clause (e.g. I answered). In your group, you've got one minute to find all the examples where this occurs on p. 8-9 – you don't need to write them down: after a minute, just agree with your group where the examples are... Go on then! What are you waiting for?

**Task 2:** Other sentences contain not only speech and reporting clause but also have short actions. For example, what does Lisa do at the top of page 9? What do you notice about the verb?

---

---

Now find all three examples of speech with action on p. 8-9 in your text. Work with a partner to find the examples. Here is the first one: "Then that's it, case closed," I said, shrugging.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Task 3:** Now, highlight the parts of your dialogue with action sentences, like this:

"Then that's it, case closed,"	I said,	shrugging.
↑	↑	↑
speech	reporting clause	action

Either label the parts of your dialogue or make a key to show which colour represents which part of the dialogue.

**Activity 4:**

Write three speech with action sentences of your own. Check with a partner that your speech punctuation is correct. If you're unsure, use the **Inverted Commas Poster** to remind you.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Dialogue Activity

## Part B

Reread p. 8-9 'Christopher's House'. You'll notice lots of speech sentences on these pages. In this activity, you will be exploring how dialogue is used effectively.

Task 1: Work with your group to highlight different examples of dialogue on p. 8-9 of your text into the categories below. Work through each example on the pages, and highlight the same types of dialogue with the same colour. Once you've coloured the sentences/sections, what do you notice about the colouring?

Speech with reporting clause	Speech with action	Speech with description/comment
E.g. "What are you talking about?" I said.	E.g. "Then that's it, case closed," I said, shrugging.	E.g. "What school?" I said. I already felt like crying.

Task 2: Writing dialogue isn't just a matter of writing down what characters say to one another. The best writers mix speech up with other elements such as little bits of action or description or narrator comment. In your group, look at these two examples: discuss which you prefer and why.

"What are you talking about?" I asked.  
"You should tell him, Isabel," Dad said.

"What are you talking about?" I asked, rubbing the sleep from my eyes.  
Dad looked over at Mom and shook his head.  
"You should tell him, Isabel," he said, quietly.  
My stomach fell. I knew something bad was coming.

Writing dialogue is like a creating a meal – you wouldn't just eat chips, you'd maybe have vegetables and chicken with it. It's the same with dialogue: you don't just have speech, you have reporting clauses and action or description or narrator comment; and you mix them up to create variety and interest.

Choose a section of text from page 8 without speech or with simple speech with reporting clauses and write a 'dialogue meal' like the one in Task 2. You should aim for at least three examples of speech and a variety of reporting clauses, short actions, descriptions and narrator comment.

Use the **Inverted Commas Poster** and check with a partner to make sure that your speech punctuation is correct. Compare your version with R J Palacio's version. Which is better?



