Creative Writing 2 Class Recap

Class Recap: The Art of Dialogue

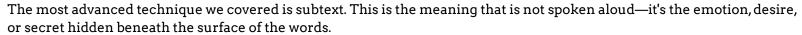
Date:	October 26th
Focus:	Dialogue as a tool to reveal Character, advance Plot, and create Tone.
Objective:	Analyze how professional writers use purposeful dialogue to convey information without using description.

What We Learned Today

We learned that in strong creative writing, dialogue is action—it's never just filler or small talk. Every line must have a job to do. We saw that controlling diction (word choice) and syntax (sentence length/rhythm) helps infuse dialogue with tone and character personality, which we practiced in our "Invisible Scene."

Dialogue's Three Jobs	How We Practiced			
Reveal Character	Wrote an exchange where one person sounded confident and the other anxious using only their words (Exercise 1).			
Move the Plot	Wrote lines that caused a sudden, frightening realization to jumpstart the story (Exercise 2).			
Establish Tone	Analyzed the fast, interrupted dialogue in the Social Network clip to show the tense, arrogant tone of the relationship.			

Review: The Power of Subtext 😯



- What is said: "We need to talk about what happened last night."
- What is unsaid (Subtext): "I know you're lying, and I'm scared about the consequences."
- How to create it: Use hesitation (ellipses...) or contradiction (a character sounds calm but uses aggressive words). The subtext is what makes dialogue feel realistic and tense.

Key Takeaways for Your Writing

Remember these rules as you revise your own dialogue:

- 1. Dialogue is a Shortcut: Don't write, "The villain was mean." Make the villain's dialogue sound mean using harsh diction and short sentences.
- 2. Use Interruptions: If a character is nervous or impatient, let them interrupt or use dashes (—) to show their thoughts are broken. This is a form of syntax control.
- 3. Read it Aloud: Always read your dialogue aloud! If it sounds stiff or too formal for the character, their voice is off. **The voice should match the personality.**

Homework: Dialogue Annotation

Your task is to be a detective! Apply your skills to a published book and analyze how a professional author makes their dialogue purposeful. (See handout for details.)

Find: A six-line passage of dialogue in a book. Analyze: What does the diction reveal about the speaker's personality (character)? What is the subtext—what do the characters really mean? How does the dialogue push the plot forward?

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Homework: Dialogue Annotation 💬

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Name.
Objective: Analyze how a professional author uses dialogue to reveal character and advance the plot, using the techniques we saw in the film clip.
Instructions: Find a passage in a novel or short story you are currently reading that contains at least three exchanges (six lines) of dialogue. Copy the passage and answer the questions below.
I. The Dialogue Passage
Book Title & Author:
Copy the passage below (or attach separately):
2. Analysis Questions
Character Voice (Diction & Syntax): How does the word choice (diction) of one character's lines immediately tell you about their personality, background, or mood?
• Subtext & Tone: Find one line where the character is saying one thing, but you can tell they mean something else (the subtext). What is the true emotion/tone being expressed?
The Line:
The True Emotion/Subtext:
Dialogue as Plot Action: How does this specific piece of dialogue move the plot forward? (Does it reveal a crucial secret, force a character to make a decision, or start a fight that changes the story's direction?)