

CREATIVE WRITING 2

Week 5 Homework: The "No-Tag" Horror Scene

Name:

Date:

The Assignment Overview

Write a 1-page narrative scene (200–250 words) depicting a spooky or tense confrontation between two characters. Your goal is to build suspense and show character dynamics without relying on repetitive dialogue tags.

The Three Writing Constraints

1. ZERO Dialogue Tags (The Main Challenge): You are strictly forbidden from using words like said, asked, yelled, whispered, replied, or screamed. You must identify every speaker using micro-actions (action beats).
2. Dialogue Subtext: At least one character must be concealing a secret, fear, or hidden motive. What they say out loud must differ from what they are feeling or holding back.
3. Atmospheric Setting (Week 4 Loop-Back): Include at least 2 sensory details (sight, sound, touch, smell) that make the spooky location feel tangible and unsettling.

COMPARE: DIALOGUE TAGS VS. MICRO-ACTIONS

✗ WEAK (TAG-HEAVY & BORING)

"Did you touch the altar?" asked Maya. "No," lied Jonah nervously.

"You are lying," she said angrily. "It was an accident," he whispered.

✓ STRONG (SUBTEXT & ACTION BEATS)

Maya stepped into the archway, her flashlight beam locked on Jonah's dirt-stained sleeve. "Did you touch the altar?"

Jonah shoved his hands into his coat pockets, his knuckles white. "No." Maya raised her flashlight. "Your wrists are covered in black dust."

💡💡 Pre-Writing Brainstorming (Complete Before Drafting)

1. Who are your two characters?

2. What secret is one character hiding? (Subtext)
3. What is the spooky setting?
4. List 2 sensory details (e.g., rusted iron smell, floorboard creak):

Section 2: Drafting & Self-Assessment.

SELECT ONE PROMPT FOR YOUR

SCENE:

Option A: The Porch at Midnight. Two friends standing outside a rumored haunted house.

Option B: The Masked Visitor. A late trick-or-treater who refuses to leave the doorstep.

Option C: Locked In. Two students trapped in the school basement during a power outage.

Draft Your "No-Tag" Scene Below (Aim for 200–250 words):

◆◆ Student Revision Checklist

I scanned my scene and removed ALL dialogue tags (said, asked, yelled, replied, etc.).

Every speaker is clearly identified through physical micro-actions before or after speaking.

At least one character is hiding a clear secret or emotion (subtext).

I incorporated at least 2 sensory details to make the setting feel eerie and atmospheric.

TEACHER EVALUATION RUBRIC

Micro-Actions & No Tags (6W3b)	Zero dialogue tags used. Every line uses vivid action beats to identify speakers smoothly.	1–2 accidental tags. Micro actions identify most speakers clearly.	Relies heavily on dialogue tags (said/asked) or lacks physical action.
Subtext & Tension (6L3)	Subtext is powerful; body language reveals clear hidden secrets or unsaid fear.	Subtext is present; character emotions are visible beneath the dialogue.	Dialogue is purely literal; characters state feelings directly with no subtext.
Spooky Setting (6W3d)	Includes 2+ vivid sensory details that seamlessly enhance the creepy mood.	Includes 1–2 sensory details that establish a spooky atmosphere.	Setting is absent or named without sensory description.