

Dialogue: The Fastest Way to Improve Your Story

Presentation Handout
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A short dialogue checklist for your work-in-progress

- Are the speakers clearly denoted by dialogue tags?
- Does your dialogue have purpose? For example: Does it advance the plot? Create conflict? Reveal character? Build suspense?
- When you use descriptive beats, do you have a good balance of dialogue and action (audio versus video)?
- Have you reduced your reliance on overburdening dialogue tags with adjectives or adverbs (the dreaded “ly” words)?

Although today’s writers aren’t as guilty of overloading dialogue tags, said isn’t the only tag used. Other popular dialogue tags include but aren’t limited to:

asked	insisted	snapped
murmured	demanded	confirmed
whispered	explained	echoed
shouted	objected	squeaked
piped up	broke in	teased
muttered	begged	ground out
replied	rasped	barked
countered	offered	ordered