

USE ELLIPSES IN NARRATIVE DIALOGUE

An **ellipsis** (. . .) is a series of three dots that can be used to indicate a pause, hesitation, or break in a speaker's thoughts. Ellipses represent a more dramatic pause than a comma but a less confident pause than a dash. Used sparingly, ellipses can be great tools in narrative or informal writing to help readers "hear" written dialogue more clearly.



Directions: For each scenario, write a line of dialogue incorporating ellipses to show the desired pause.

Ex. Scenario: **a pause to announce competition results**

Sample answers

"And the grand prize goes to . . . Jennifer!"

1 Scenario: **a pause to consider the best way to accomplish a task**

"Let's first . . . set out all of the pieces."

2 Scenario: **a break to recall the name of something**

"That bakery used to be called . . . Snowflakes, I think."

3 Scenario: **a hesitation before revealing something embarrassing**

"I . . . might have put salt instead of sugar in these cookies."

4 Scenario: **a pause to share good news**

"I heard back from the art academy, and . . . I got in!"

5 Scenario: **a hesitation before telling someone a secret**

"You can't tell anyone, but . . . I'm planning a surprise party for Shawna."

6 Scenario: **a break to show that the speaker cannot believe what they just saw**

"Did I just . . . see my favorite singer outside the grocery store?"

7 Scenario: **a pause to figure out the way to a destination**

"You'll need to turn . . . just after those rose bushes."

8 Scenario: **a hesitation to show that the speaker is unsure of how to describe an event**

"It was so strange! It was sort of like . . . a tidal wave of people rushing at me."

9 Scenario: **a break to show that the speaker doesn't know what to say next and trails off**

"It might be okay, but I don't know . . ."

10 Scenario: **a pause because the speaker is feeling anxious about trying something new**

"So I . . . put the sauce on first before I try it?"