

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Looking at Voice in *Bud, Not Buddy*

Voice is the energy, intention, and tone behind a piece of writing. Writers shape the voice of their piece or their characters based on the intended audience. Read each excerpt below and circle language choices the author has made to help the main character's voice (age, personality, tone) come through in the story.

### STORY EXCERPT #1

(From *Bud, Not Buddy*, by Christopher Paul Curtis)

### Notes About Language that Shows Voice

Even though it was me who was in a lot of trouble I couldn't help but feel sorry for Jerry. Not only because he was going to have to live around three girls, but also because being six is a real rough age to be at. Most folks think you start to be a real adult when you're fifteen or sixteen years old, but that's not true, it really starts when you're around six.

It's at six that grown folks don't think you're a cute little kid anymore, they talk to you and expect that you understand everything they mean. And you'd best understand too, if you aren't looking for some real trouble, 'cause it's around six that grown folks stop giving you little swats and taps and jump clean up to giving you slugs that'll knock you right down and have you seeing stars in the middle of the day. The first foster home I was in taught me that real quick.

Six is a bad time too 'cause that's when some real scary things start to happen to your body, it's around then that your teeth start coming a-loose in your mouth.

You wake up one morning and it seems like your tongue is the first one to notice that something strange is going on, 'cause as soon as you get up there it is pushing and rubbing up against one of your front teeth and I'll be doggoned if that tooth isn't the littlest bit wiggly.

At first you think it's kind of funny, but the tooth keeps getting looser and looser and one day, in the middle of pushing the tooth back and forth and squinching your eyes shut, you pull it clean out. It's the scariest thing you can think of 'cause you lose control of your tongue at the same time and no matter how hard you try to stop it, it won't leave the new hole in your mouth alone, it keeps digging around in the spot where that tooth used to be.

You tell some adult about what's happening but all they do is say it's normal. You can't be too sure, though, 'cause it shakes you up a whole lot more than grown folks think it does when perfectly good parts of your body commence to loosening up and falling off of you.

Unless you're as stupid as a lamppost you've got to wonder what's coming off next, your arm? Your leg? Your neck? Every morning when you wake up it seems a lot of your parts aren't stuck on as good as they used to be.

Six is real tough. That's how old I was when I came to live here in the Home. That's how old I was when Momma died.

Reflect on how Christopher Paul Curtis uses language choices to shape Bud's voice. What strategies does Curtis use to show voice? Do you think they are effective?