

Name: _____

Date: _____



Using Dialogue to Pace Your Piece



Have you ever noticed that authors speed up their stories by jumping ahead in time by hours, days, weeks, or sometimes even years? They speed up their stories by telling the reader what is happening in the story. They also slow down the action by showing the reader what is happening through imagery, or detailed description. Another way authors can slow the pacing of their narrative is by carefully selecting when to include dialogue between two or more characters so the reader can feel like they are witnessing the scene.

Example:

Natalia walked home after school with one thing on her mind. When she arrived, she rummaged through the kitchen for a snack and made her plan. When the time was right, she took action. Like a ninja, she sneaked into her brother's room and approached the bed. She slid one hand under the mattress, and then the other. She struggled a bit but was able to lift it halfway, just enough to reveal his diary! She hoisted the mattress onto one shoulder so that she could reach the other arm underneath, just enough to grasp the book in her prying fingers.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM?!?" her brother shouted out of nowhere.

"I'm finding out what you plan to do to Julia on the bus tomorrow! You and Jerome have no right to scheme against her!" she said as she darted out of the room, diary in hand.

Chasing her down the hallway, he dove at her ankles and just missed her as she flew out the door and down the street to Julia's house. "You won't catch me!" she shouted behind her.

"You're gonna pay for this!" he warned back.

1. Go back and read first paragraph. Make a mark in the text (a bracket or star) where the action gets more detailed and the pace slows.
2. In your own words, tell how the dialogue in the example slows down the action and pulls you into the story.

3. Now, using a novel in your classroom, find an example where the author uses dialogue to slow the story down to invite the reader into the scene.

Page	What characters are talking?	How does this dialogue slow the pace of the story and invite the reader into the scene?