

Writing Dialogue

How to create
memorable voices and
fictional conversations
that crackle with wit,
tension and nuance

TOM CHIARELLA

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Characters need to speak to each other. Tom Chiarella shows you how. Whether it's an argument, a love scene, a powwow among sixth graders or scientists in a lab, this book demonstrates how to write dialogue that sounds authentic and original. You'll learn ways to find ideas for literary discussions by tuning in to what you hear every day. You'll learn to use gestures instead of speech, to insert silences that are as effective as outbursts, to add shifts in tone, and other strategies for making conversations more compelling. Nuts and bolts are covered, too - formatting, punctuation, dialogue tags - everything you need to get your characters talking.

Writing Dialogue Details

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Gabi says

Great stuff. Clear and valuable advice, meaningful exercises. I'll definitely return to this book in the future.

Nikki Magennis says

A wonderful look at writing dialogue. I got heaps from this book - learned lots about veracity and producing meaningful dialogue. Entertainingly written, too. A definite essential for a writer, I'd say. Contains plenty of exercises, and some fabulous insights on things like silence, what is not said, plus basic nuts and bolts practicalities.

It's pretty short, only reason I gave it less than five stars. I wanted more!

Margot says

This book on writing dialogue is chock-full of useful exercises and applicable skills and techniques. Everything is communicated clearly and supported with examples. I liked it so much, I actually bought myself a copy for future reference.

Kelsey Bryant says

Very helpful dialogue tips here, for any writer! Beware of a few profanities, however. It includes exercises at the end of each chapter that seem helpful, but I have yet to try them. I look forward to doing so, and implementing his fresh suggestions into my own writing.

Leemaslibros says

Si ya es malo que haya pocos libros sobre cómo escribir diálogos, peor es que uno de ellos sea una masturbación constante del autor salpicada por algunas pistas de escaso interés.

Lee Sinclair says

To me, the characters are what makes a story, so dialogue is one of the most critical elements of fiction writing. This book covers all aspects of dialogue and provides lots of specifics.

G.M. Burrow says

So good, I was just about squealing by page five. And you can tell that 95% of the fiction authors and screenplay writers out there have NOT read this book.

Luke Miller says

This was a very helpful book. The descriptions and examples were excellent. I think many of the exercises in this book would be helpful for those who are not interesting in writing fiction. They would make you more observant. Help you enjoy the life around you more.

S.P. says

This is a nice little guide to writing dialogue in fiction. Chiaralla's focus is on listening to real people talk, how they talk, what they say - emphasizing any dialogue your write is from the characters perspective rather than the writer's or for the benefit for the reader.

There are a number of techniques for doing this, and a excellent last chapter on dialogue tags, and punctuation.

Most informative

Candace says

When it comes to writing, I have heard, "Learn the rules, then you can break them." Tom Chiarella tells us he is only offering advice on writing dialogue, not rules. He advises us to listen to dialogue. Listen to our family, friends and, even, movies. We are to jot down what we hear and use it to create new dialogue. He advises comparing the dialogue in a book to its screen play. Last, we come to the final chapter titled Nuts and Bolts. In this chapter we learn about dialogue tags, adverbs, present participles and punctuation. Each chapter is followed by exercises. There is also an appendix at the end of the book.

Douglas Wilson says

Quite good.

Josh Hutton says

The best thing about this book is it demolishes your notions of dialogue, of listening, of silence—and

restructures the way you see friends, family, and creative media. "Writing Dialogue," while thorough, also moves with both lighthearted examples and biting wit. By far one of the best books on writing that I've read.

Nikki says

If you like books about writing, this is a good one. It's clear and helpful. It's not so much into cheerleading the fledgling authors as teaching the tricks of dialogue. It's very focused, so you are given tons and tons ideas for just dialogue. It's a tad dry, but good.

Bucket says

I've been reading a lot of books about writing technique--only posting the good ones here. This was entertaining to read and informative. Chiarella doesn't bog the reader down with his own set of rules, instead he skillfully and humorously explains what works in dialogue and what doesn't. Also buried within are other valuable insights about writing. Recommended.

Sarah says

This is the first (reference) book I picked up on my own and I really did learn a lot more than I had expected to. Some bits were slightly repetitive and could have been more impartial?

There (supposedly) aren't any hard and fast rules when it comes to writing, but I did find some (along the lines of 'rules') mentioned in the book worth following.
