

Motivation and Reaction Units (MRUs)

Dwight V. Swain (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwight_V._Swain)

As presented in *Structuring Your Novel: Essential Keys for Writing an Outstanding Story* by K. M. Weiland

Motivation – an outside stimulus that affects your character; a catalyst that causes your character to react

Reaction – the effect of the cause:

1. Feeling and/or thought (involuntary subconscious response)
2. Action (involuntary physical reaction and/or conscious physical movements)
3. Speech

Parallel Structure

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallelism_%28grammar%29

In grammar, parallelism is a balance of two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses

"I went to the store, I went to the mall and I went to bed"

"I went to the store, to the mall, and to bed"

parallel construction with "I went"

<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/how-to-write-dialogue.aspx>

Fenster crawled slowly, steadily, and won the race.

Fenster crawled slowly and steadily, AND won the race.

If you want the actions of saying and doing to be more like separate events, then repeat the subject for the verb of doing.

"You shouldn't have!" said Squiggly, and grabbed the box of chocolates.

"You shouldn't have!" said Squiggly, and HE grabbed the box of chocolates.

Tags and Adverbs

<http://www.writing-world.com/fiction/said.shtml>

"Go away," he laughed. Can he really speak that line while laughing? Maybe -- but it might be painful.

"Tom Swifties"? For example: "The temperature is going down," he said coolly.

Readers accept the words said and asked; in fact, they barely notice those words as they read. However, words such as "hollered" and "bawled" often draw their attention away from the dialogue and yank them out of the story

<http://www.fiction-writers-mentor.com/dialogue-tags.html>

"I think we should go this way," said Jane.

"I think we should go this way," Jane said.

if you're using pronouns, always put them first, e.g. he said rather than said he.

"I think we should go this way," Jane said, pointing.

Mark nodded. "You're right."

If there are only two people speaking in the scene, you can leave out many - if not most - tags

"Oh you always do that!" said Clara.

"I do not!"

"You do. Every single time."

"I don't, and I resent you saying that."

use description instead of tags

Clara shook her hair back in frustration, "I'm serious, Philip. I can't bear it when you see her."

tags such as: ejaculated, bragged, declared and exclaimed should never be used. They're just too purple and they're falling into the trap of telling-not-showing.

avoid adverbs because it's telling rather than showing

Tips

<http://johnaugust.com/2007/how-to-write-dialogue>

1. Listen to how actual people talk
2. Figure out the flow of your dialogue
 - a. the how, the when, the why
3. Pattern out the information
 - a. almost always involve an exchange of information
 - b. decide not only what facts Bob knows, but how he's anticipating Mary will react to the news
 - c. pretend to convey information between characters while really conveying information to audience
4. Write the scribble version
 - a. very rough draft of a scene, devoid of formatting, punctuation and other garnishes
5. Write the nice version
6. Ask: Are characters listening, or just speaking?
7. Ask: Is there a shorter version that works as well?

<http://www.darcypattison.com/characters/unique-character-dialogue/>

all dialog for one character in a file - read through for consistency, uniqueness, etc.
Or compare two character's dialogue files and see if they are too similar.

Use of Dialect and Foreign Words

<http://sowrite.us.com/dialect-in-dialogue-how-much-is-too-much/>

1. Translate, using italics
“Ah’d nee lak teh see ‘at, laddie,” the wary Scot ventured. *I’d not like to see that.*
2. Add dialect in italics
When Bonatti said, “I don’t ever want to see you again, Krepkey,” it came out *dough nevva wanna seeyuh*.
3. Use dialect only in certain key words or phrases
“I dint mean to offend you, Mr. Tartaglia, I swear.” I could barely breath, I was so scared.
He stared at me for a minute with coal-black eyes, and finally smiled. “Fuhgeddaboudit, kid.”
4. Use other-character observations for effect
“You may come in, Lieutenant, but I have only a minute to spare before I must leave for a meeting,” Meltzkamp said.
He pronounced my title Lute-Nant, but otherwise the old Kraut’s English was flawless. I stepped inside.
5. Insert foreign words or phrases in italics, untranslated
The waiter approached us stiffly. “*Bonjour, monsieur et madame*, welcome to Chez Jacques.” We could barely see his eyes behind his uplifted nose. I couldn’t read more than a word or two on the linen menu.

Voice

<http://socialpolitan.org/fiction-writing-craft/m/articles/view/Character-Voice-What-Why-Where-and-How>

What is their gender?

What is their educational and/or intelligence level?

What does the dialog show us about the character's personality, goals or emotions?

Give a character habits that indicate an emotional state

filter perceptions through a character's passions, hobbies or beliefs