

Lesson 4: Dialogue

Dialogue is the exact words spoken between characters. It reveals characters' personalities and brings them to life by showing the reader what they are thinking and feeling. Dialogue can also give the reader information about what is happening in the plot.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following passage from Edwidge Dandicat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, about a girl named Sophie moving from Haiti to New York to live with her mother. Notice how dialogue is used in the story. Answer the questions that follow.

- 1 My mother came forward. I knew it was my mother because she came up to me and grabbed me and began to spin me like a top, so she could look at me. The woman who had been with me looked on without saying anything. "Stay here," my mother said to me in Creole. She walked over to a corner with the woman, whispered a few things to her, and handed her what seemed like money.
- 5 "I cannot thank you enough," my mother said. "There is no need," the woman said. She bowed slightly and walked away. I raised my hand to wave good-bye. The woman had already turned her back and was heading inside. It was as though I had disappeared. She did not even see me anymore. As the woman went through the gate, my mother kissed me on the lips. "I cannot believe that I am looking at you," she said. "You are my little girl. You are here."
- 10 She pinched my cheeks and patted my head. "Say something," she urged. "Say something. Just speak to me. Let me hear your voice." She pressed my face against hers and held fast. "How are you feeling?" she asked. "Did you have a nice plane flight?" I nodded.
- 15 "You must be very tired," she said. "Let us go home." She grabbed my suitcase with one hand and my arm with the other. Outside it was overcast and cool. "My goodness." Her scrawny body shivered. "I didn't even bring you something to put over your dress." She dropped the suitcase on the sidewalk, took off the denim jacket she had on and guided my arms through the sleeves.

Focus Lessons



1. What emotions are probably going through Sophie's head in this scene? What details in this scene suggest her emotional state? Explain.

2. What do the words, gestures, and actions of Sophie's mother reveal about her emotional state or her feelings toward her daughter? Explain, referring to specific places in the text in your answer.

3. How would this scene be different without dialogue? What does dialogue add to this scene? Explain.



For more information on dialogue, see *Glencoe Literature, Course 4*, pp. 121 and R4.