

## Dialogue formatting: An example

I looked stuffy, felt fake and wondered if I'd be able to make conversation at all with the judges during my interview. My body tingled as they called my name and I went in, sitting at a chair across from the three strangers.

"Well, hello there," a balding man of 50 or so spoke for the group. I smiled, a thin, wilting smile.

"We are just going to ask you a few questions about yourself and we would like you to answer openly and honestly," explained the woman whose nametag said 'Belle'.

"Okay," I squeaked.

"Now, then Pat, oh, I'm sorry, Pam, what are some of your hobbies?"

I wondered if she would be asking all the questions. "I like to read," I declared confidently. Even though it was true, I knew this was something that adults liked about me.

"Really? What do you like to read?" Belle continued her line of questioning. "What are you reading now?"

Before I had given my answer any thought, I replied honestly, "Valley of the Dolls by Jacqueline Susan."

The judges looked around at each other. All three seemed to know that Jacqueline Susan and a book called Valley of the Dolls was not appropriate reading material for a high school girl, especially not a high school girl in a beauty contest. My virtue was in doubt.

"Uh, okay," now the other man spoke. He was younger with dark hair. He looked married with two kids-pretty bland. His nametag said Bob. "What about a new question. What is your favorite subject in school?"

I had to look at him with question in my eye. Was he kidding? Didn't I just tell him that I liked to read? He had no idea that I was going to say English and get right back on books. Maybe I should tell him that I had just finished Catcher in the Rye or was this whole line of questioning a trick?

"English," I decided not to give them any time. I would fix this. "I like to write, too."

"Oh, how nice," Bob's face lifted a little and the other judges smiled at each other.

We managed to carry on quite nicely for a while. I felt comfortable at this point and decided to be 100% honest for the rest of the interview. So, I guess I wasn't surprised when the topic went in the direction of family.

"Teaching college would be a great plan, but what about getting married and having children. When do plan to squeeze that into your plan?" Belle smiled in a lighthearted way. You could tell this was a nosey question but she got away with asking it anyway.

"I don't," I proclaimed. "I don't want to get *married* anyway. I might decide to have a kid later on."

Belle's overly made-up face went white as a sheet. The men looked down at their hands. So much for honesty. Some times people just don't want it.

The balding man found his wristwatch. "Well, that looks like all the time that we have today. Thanks so much, Pam." He stood up, and so did I. Belle and Bob mumbled goodbye and then I turned and exited.

As soon as I hit the other side of the door, some of the girls surrounded me.

"What did they ask you? What did you say? Are they nice? Is it all men or is there a woman, too?"

I exhaled loudly. "Look ya'll, I gotta go. My mom's waiting on me. It's a snap. I'll see ya tonight."

## Dialogue Formatting Rules

- Begin dialogue with quotation marks. "
- End dialogue with quotation marks. "
- Include exactly what the speaker said inside quotation marks. Try to capture the speaker's voice.
- Include end punctuation inside quotation marks.
- When using a tag at the beginning of the dialogue use a comma after the tag and before the quotation marks. (He said, "I am not going!")
- Use a comma at the end of the dialogue, inside the quotation marks, if your tag is at the end. ("I don't want to go," he said.)