

# Dialogue Checklist: Expert Hacks to Make Your Dialogue Shine

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\*Companion to “Dialogue Hacks Even Expert Writers Use”\*

Use this checklist as a quick-reference tool when writing or revising dialogue. Each item below is a proven technique used by experienced writers to create natural, compelling, and character-driven conversations.

- Have I trimmed unnecessary lines like greetings, filler, or over-explaining?
- Does the dialogue serve a purpose (reveal character, move the plot, increase tension)?
- Is there subtext—meaning beneath the surface of the words?
- Do characters speak in distinct voices that reflect their background, values, and personality?
- Have I included physical beats or interior thoughts between lines to ground the scene?
- Do any power dynamics shift during the conversation?
- Are interruptions, silences, or topic shifts used to reflect tension or control?
- Have I read the dialogue out loud (or recorded it) to hear if it sounds natural and varied?
- Do I use imperfect speech patterns (fragments, tics, hesitations) to reflect personality?
- Have I avoided over-polishing? Does the dialogue reflect emotional truth more than cleverness?

## Final Tip:

After a dialogue-heavy scene, try removing all tags and narration. Can you still tell who's speaking? If not, revisit character voice and personality.