Use Dialogue to Show Character Feelings and Emotions

1. Focus

Explain Using Dialogue to Show Character Feelings and Emotions

Say: When I write fiction, I want my readers to understand my characters’ feelings and emotions. I can share a narrator’s thoughts and feelings when one character tells the story. I can also share my characters’ feelings through dialogue. My characters discuss their feelings and emotions when they speak to each other in a story. Today we’re going to look at an example of this in a realistic fiction story and think about why we might want to write dialogue about feelings and emotions in our own realistic fiction stories.

Model How Writers Use Dialogue to Show Character Feelings and Emotions

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for places where Maria, the main character, shares her feelings and emotions as you read the text aloud.

I said, “I’m sorry, Mom. I shouldn’t have left you. Not even for a minute. I hope you will accept my apology. I also hope that you will be willing to change our plans. Instead of spending the morning together . . . let’s spend the whole day together.”

Modeling Text

Say: In this paragraph from the end of the story, Maria has had time to think about her earlier actions. She shares her emotions when she says, “I’m sorry, Mom.” She feels she should not have left her mom, “even for a minute.” She says that she hopes her mom will accept her apology. Maria has solved her problem from the beginning of the story, when she wondered whether to stay home with her mom or go with her friend Jake to see the cave. Maria also shows that she understands her mother’s feelings by offering to spend the day together. By using dialogue, the writer shows the feelings of the narrator and another character, as well.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Dialogue to Show Character Feelings and Emotions

Write the practice text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

Mike went home. He helped Dad clean up the mess. Then they played soccer together.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to add Mike’s feelings and emotions to these sentences. Remind students to add dialogue to show his thoughts and feelings. Partners should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class. They should be ready to explain how they added Mike’s thoughts and feelings.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite pairs to read aloud their sentences and explain how they added Mike’s thoughts and feelings to these sentences by using dialogue. Record sample student sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write their own realistic fiction stories.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned that writers can share their characters’ feelings and emotions—often in the dialogue of a story. When readers understand how characters feel, readers gain a clearer understanding of what happens in the story and why it is important. Remember, a good realistic fiction story includes characters who express their thoughts and emotions. As you write your story, remember to include dialogue in the story in which the characters share their emotions.

Encourage students to apply what they have learned about dialogue as they draft and revise their stories. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of dialogue and other author’s craft elements using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite two or three students who have used dialogue effectively to read aloud a section of their realistic fiction stories.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

While other students work with partners or during independent writing time, work one on one with beginning ELs. Model generating oral sentences in which characters share emotions and feelings using sentence frames such as the following:

He said he felt ______. She said she felt ______.

Write model sentences on chart paper. Invite students to read them with you. Then ask students to generate additional oral sentences of their own using the same sentence frames.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: dialogue/el diálogo; discuss/discutir, paragraph/el párrafo.