

# Storytelling for Everyone

## Week Five



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21 October 2024

**A little thinking  
about dialogue**

# Overview of the class

## Week 1



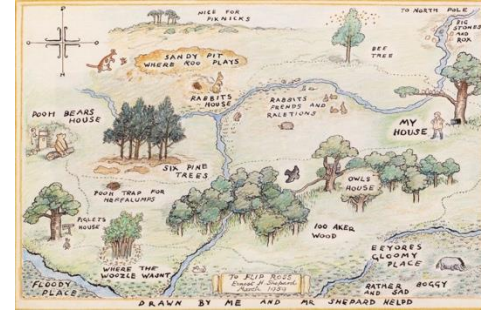
All About Plots

## Week 2



All About Character

## Week 3



Building Worlds &  
Environments

## Week 4



Visual Storytelling

## Week 5

Work on a draft

## Week 6

Time, feedback  
and support

## Week 7

Time, feedback  
and support

## Week 8

Present a draft



# Listen to strangers speaking

- Record
- Transcribe
- Analyze

## Ask how the words people say:

- Contributes to revealing their character and stage on their journey?
- Supports moving the story forward (exposition)?
- Is fact vs. background vs. opinion?



# Who is speaking—character or the narrator?

## Character:

Dialog provides insight into action from first person perspective

## Narrator:

Provides a summary or guidance with a point of view attitude and/or tone



# Is there a role the speaker plays?

Example: Monday Night Football



Joe Buck

Host and play-by-play

Troy Akins

Color commentary

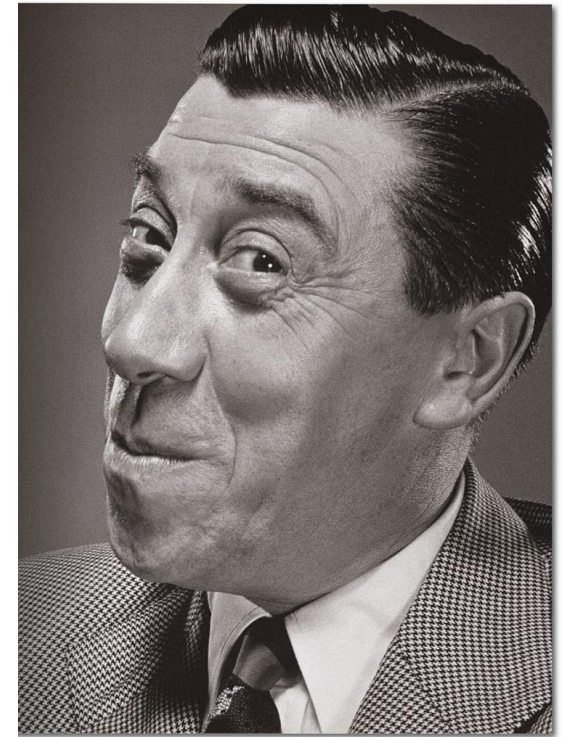
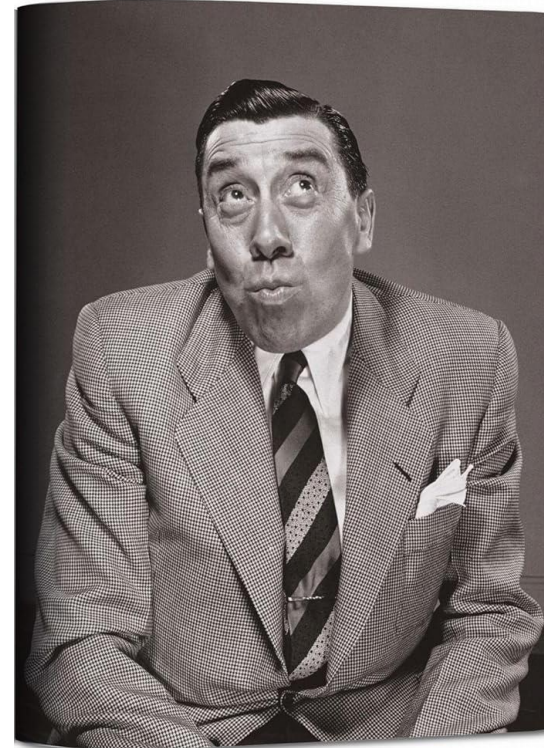
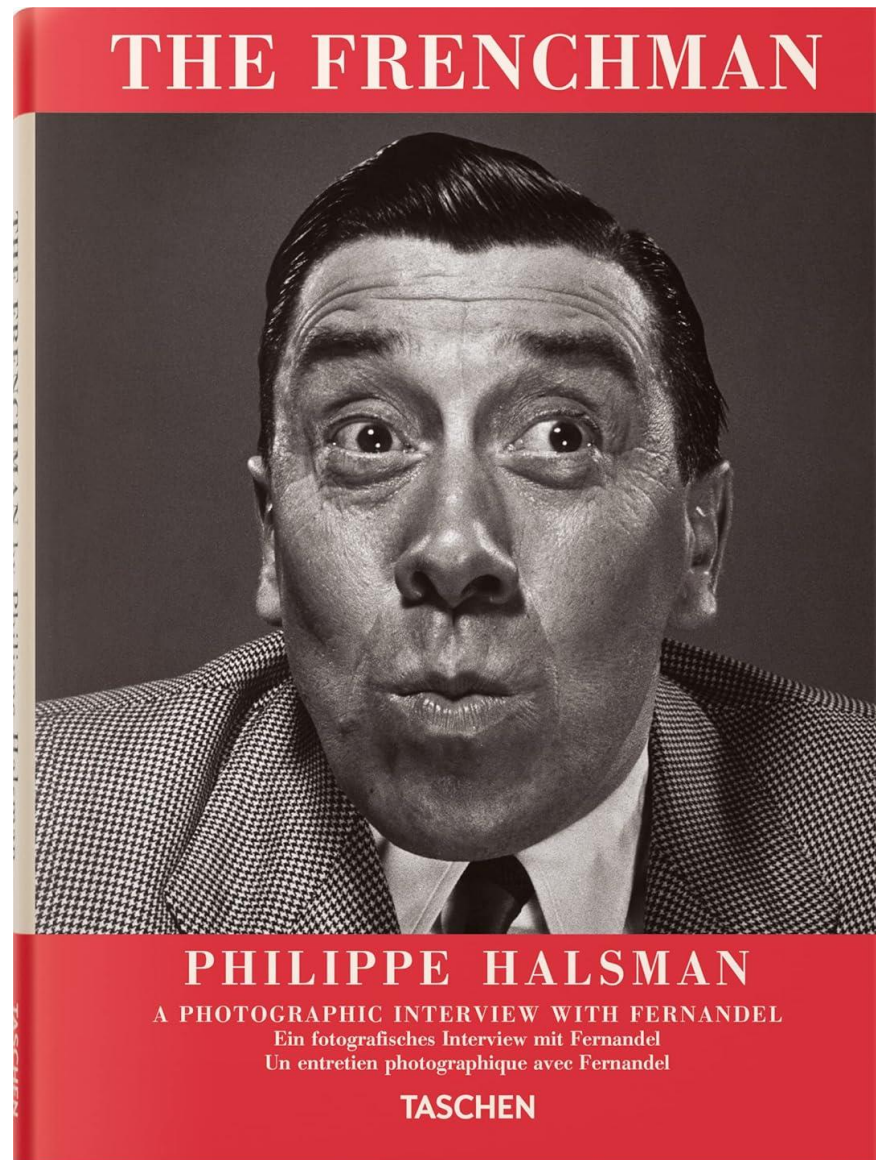


Lisa Salters

Sideline reporter



# How do the words match the face?



DID YOU EVER HEAR THAT THE FAMOUS  
RACEHORSE MAN O'WAR HAS HAD  
386 SONS AND DAUGHTERS? ISN'T THAT  
PRETTY GOOD?

Haben Sie je davon gehört, dass das berühmte  
Rennpferd Man O'War 386 Söhne und Töchter hatte?  
Nicht übel, oder?

Avez-vous déjà entendu parler du célèbre étalon  
pur-sang Man O'War et de ses 386 fils et filles?  
Que dites-vous de ça?

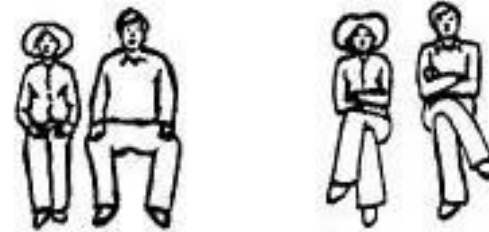
WHAT MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN  
BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO RAISE  
THE BIRTH RATE?

Welche Massnahmen ergreift die französische Regierung,  
um die Geburtenrate zu erhöhen?

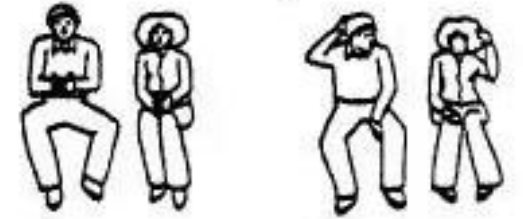
Quelles sont les mesures du gouvernement français  
pour faire monter le taux de natalité?

# Body language can support dialog

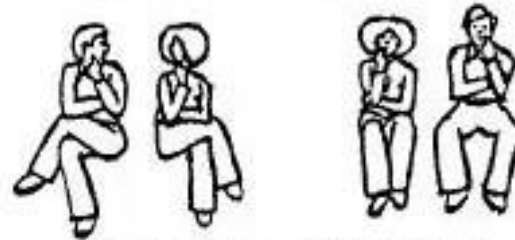
- The body can convey as much as the speaking voice
- Adds emphasis or support of the mental health of the character.



*Openness vs. Defensiveness*



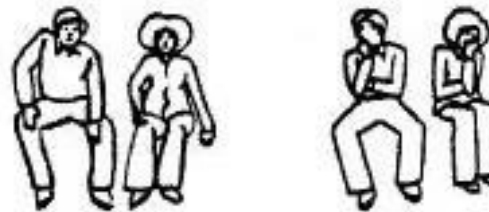
*Expectancy vs. Frustration*



*Evaluation vs. Suspicion*



*Self-control vs. Nervousness*



*Readiness vs. Boredom*



*Confidence vs. Insecurity*



# Example: Googlebox Australia

## Expression in the wild



<https://fb.watch/vhdxHgMk78/>



# Dialog is more interesting when the characters are active at the same time

- It changes the pace and makes the rhythm more interesting
- It shows the audience who's speaking without using speaker tags
- Helps to control the pace of your scenes.

TORSO	ARMS	HANDS AND FINGERS	FEET AND LEGS
<p>LEANING AWAY FROM SOMEONE: Means we dislike or disagree with them.</p>  <p>LEANING TOWARD SOMEONE: Means we like or agree with them.</p> 	<p>FINGERTIPS SPREAD ARMED ON A SURFACE:</p>  <p>A display of confidence and authority.</p>	<p>THUMBS UP:</p>  <p>A good indication of positive thoughts.</p>	<p>JUGGLING/KICKING FOOT:</p>  <p>Indicates discomfort.</p>
<p>SPREADING OUT:</p>  <p>A sign of comfort becomes a territorial or dominance display when there are serious issues being discussed.</p>	<p>ARMS AWKWARD:</p>  <p>Establishes dominance or communicates there are "issues."</p>	<p>STEERLING: (FINGER TIP TO FINGER TIP)</p>  <p>A powerful display of confidence.</p>	<p>CROSSING LEGS:</p>  <p>Indicates we are comfortable.</p>
<p>CROSSED ARMS:</p>  <p>Suddenly crossing arms tightly is a sign of discomfort.</p>	<p>ARMS BEHIND THE BACK:</p>  <p>Says "don't disagree" — keeps people at bay.</p>	<p>NECK TOUCHING:</p>  <p>Indicates emotional discomfort, doubt or insecurity.</p>	<p>TOE POINTS UPWARD:</p>  <p>Suggests a good mood.</p>

# Types of Dialog:

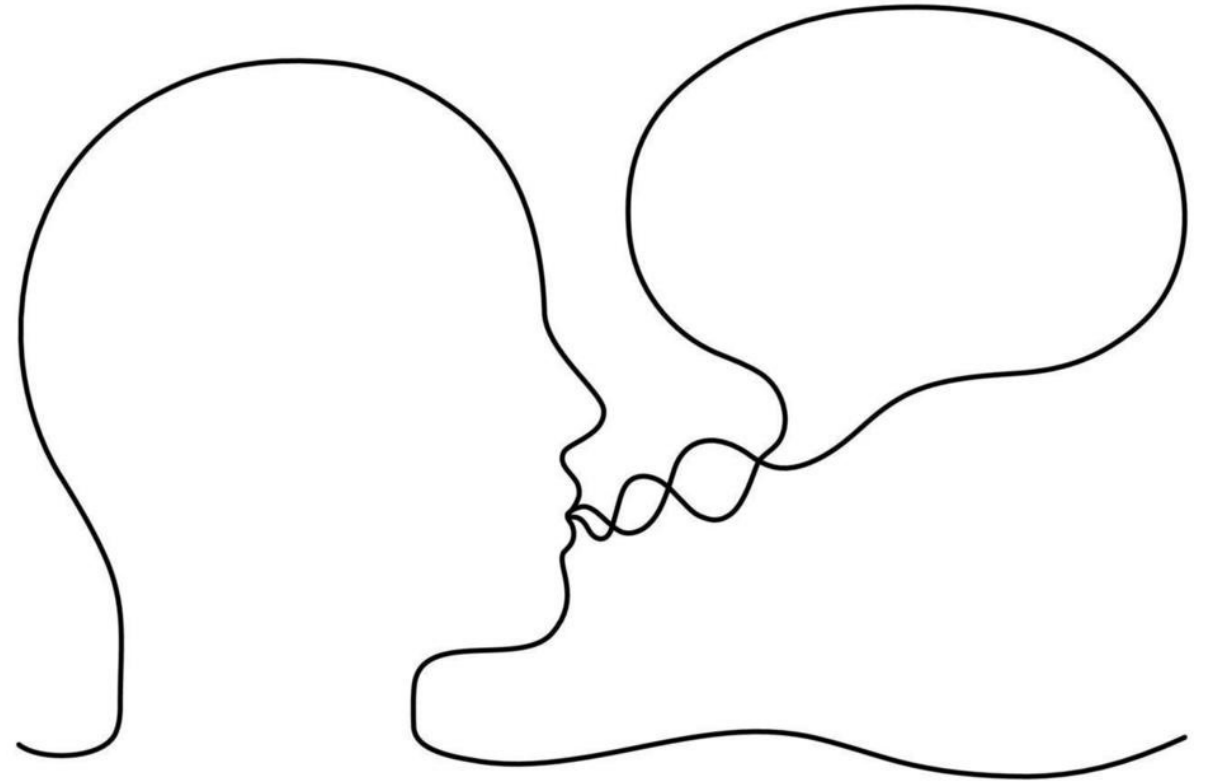
**Direct:** characters speak directly to each other

**Indirect:** Narrator summarizes what was said

**Interior:** A character's thoughts are revealed.

**Monologue:** One character speaks at length, usually to the audience

**Soliloquy:** A speech given by a character alone revealing their innermost thoughts and feelings.



# Example 1: Direct

Characters speak directly to each other



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv7eeMikM\\_w&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv7eeMikM_w&t=3s)



# Dialog can reflect relationship status

Is their speech

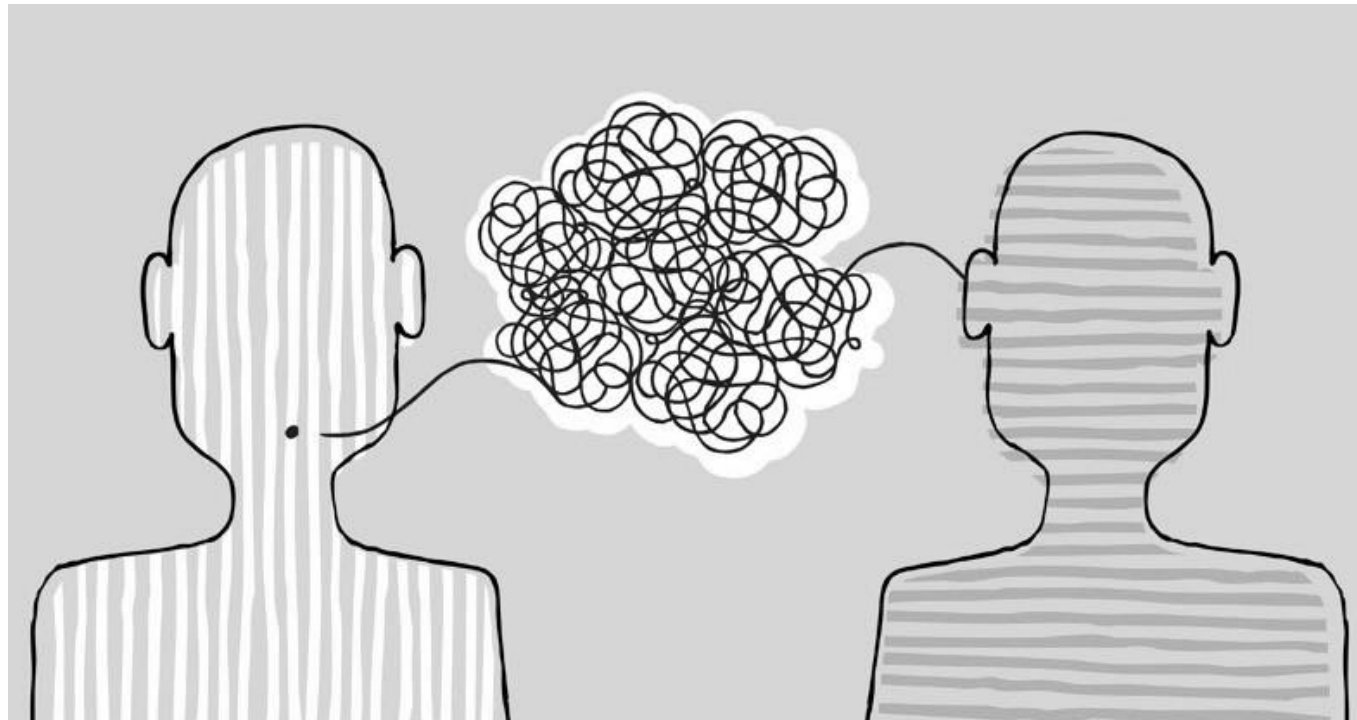
Formal?

Confident?

Faster or Slower?

Do they use

- Slang?
- Shorthand?
- Repeatable phrases?



# Example 2: Interior

A character's inner thoughts are revealed



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECnIL4RY8PQ&t=1s>

# Example 3: Indirect – Retrospective narration

Narrator tells a story that they lived from their perspective with hindsight



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ule1uM8x0dM&t=3s>



# Example 4: Monologue

Character speaks to audience and sometimes breaks the 4<sup>th</sup> wall



# Example 5: Soliloquy

Alone, a character gives a speech revealing their innermost thoughts and feelings



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Up-oGfiosE>

# Why are they talking?



● information giving



● conversation



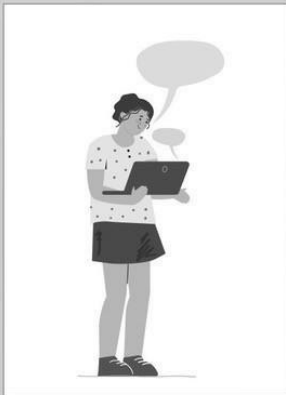
● retelling



● discourse



● dialogue



● chatting



● dialogue



● small talk



● negotiation

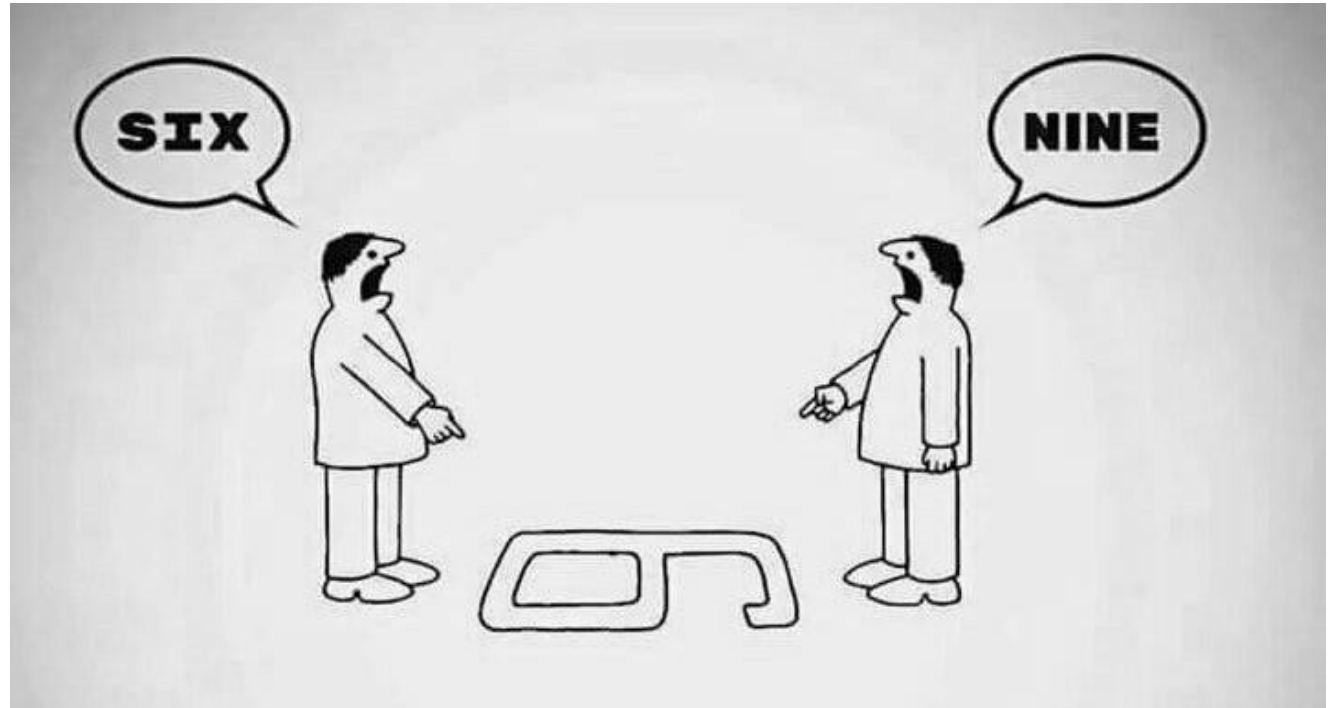


● phone call



# Every person brings their own agenda to the conversation

- Why are they saying what they are saying?
- Does it fit the character or is it a point of change or conflict?



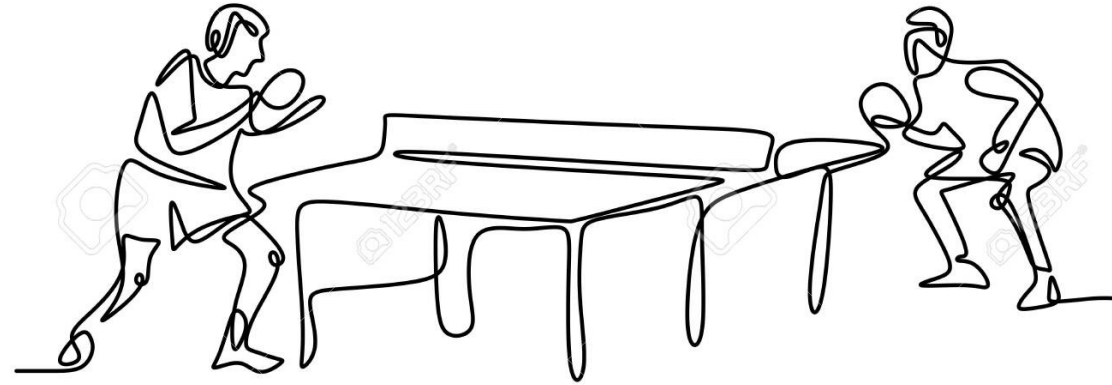
# Subtext is a powerful tool



- We rarely say exactly what we mean.
- What is the implied meaning or hidden beneath the surface of the statement?
- How is this conveyed to the audience?

# Tip: Don't Write Ping Pong Dialog

- It is boring when characters answer everything the other person asks
- It holds no surprises and there's no reason to sit up and take notice.
- Instead:
  - Use non-sequiturs (which we all do in natural conversation)
  - Have characters ignore some of the questions laid out for them by the other person, because each character is bringing their own agenda to the conversation





# Trick: Have your characters argue

You can convey a lot of information about a topic thru their conflicting opinions, without making it sound like either of the characters is saying things for the reader's benefit.



# Read the dialog out loud to really hear it

- Does it sound like a real person?
- Does it add to moving the story forward?
- Do the words they are saying fit the character?



# Say Hello To The Class Project!

## Week 1



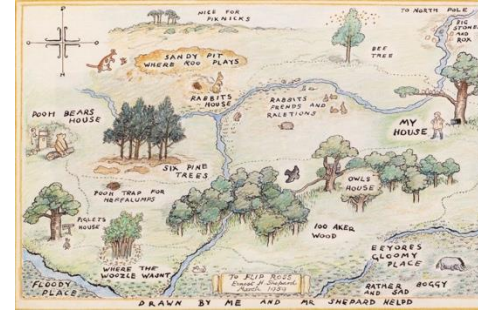
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# Hope:

Everyone creates a story to share during the last class

## Project Directions:

Book

Storyboard pitch

Graphic novel

Pitch Deck

Pecha Kucha

Script

Short video

Better idea ...

