

Screenwriting
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Dialogue and Beyond



Tips For Better Dialogue

- Dialogue is not conversation
- Say it without dialogue
- Match the dialogue to the character
- Get in late, get out early
- Don't tell us what we already know
- Don't tell us what we can see
- Hide exposition in conflict

Levels of Meaning

- **Text** – What is being said
- **Subtext** – What is meant but not said
- **Context** – How the situation changes meaning

SET UP: FIRST PAGES

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST 5-10 PAGES

- ESTABLISH THE TONE & GENRE
- INTRODUCE YOUR MAIN CHARACTER
- CLARIFY THE WORLD OF THE STORY
- HINT AT THE THEME OR MESSAGE (POWER CORRUPTS FOR EXAMPLE)
- HINT AT THE DRAMATIC STORY QUESTION
- ESTABLISH THE PROTAGONIST'S IMMEDIATE NEED OR CHALLENGE