

In earlier lessons of this chapter, you studied two important things that make a good story—the way the main character is portrayed and the way the conflict is developed. This lesson will show you how to write stories with an interesting, readable style. Your stories should *show* details rather than merely *telling* about them. Your readers should *feel* as if they can hear the conversations and see the activities in your story.

Natural Dialogue

One of the most important ways to show the details of a story is to use plenty of *dialogue* (written conversation) and to make sure it sounds natural. Dialogue helps to make the characters and events seem real. Compare the following two story beginnings. Notice how much more natural the dialogue is in the second one than in the first one.

"We have so many beans. I am tired of snapping all these beans," sighed ten-year-old Denise.

"We have finished over half the job." Her older sister Danelle tried to give some encouragement. "Denise, would you like to hang out the laundry? The washer just stopped."

"Certainly, I would like that," Denise replied, eager to take a break from doing beans. Quickly she went to get the laundry basket.

Coming back through the kitchen, she overheard some of what Danelle was saying to Darla and Daryl, the younger helpers.

"Maybe we can do that," she ended.

"Maybe you can do what?" Denise asked with interest.

"Maybe we can do something," answered Darla.

"You will find out later," added Danelle.

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"We've finished over half the job." Her older sister Danelle tried to give some encouragement. "Denise, would you like to hang out the laundry? The washer just stopped."

"Certainly," Denise replied, eager to take a break from doing beans. Quickly she went to get the laundry basket.

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"Maybe we can," she ended.

"Can what?" Denise asked with interest.

"Something," answered Darla abruptly.

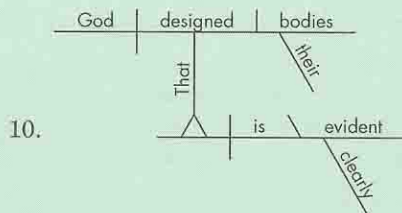
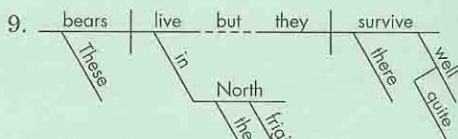
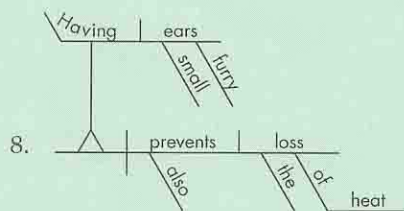
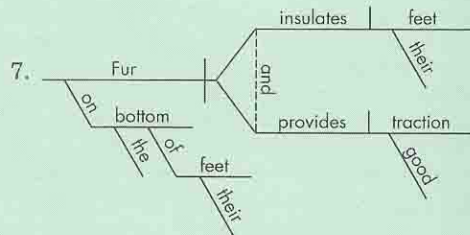
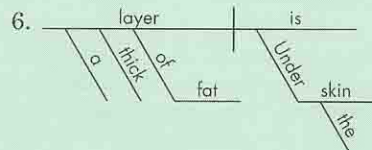
"You'll find out later," added Danelle.

Look again at the second sample above. There are several things that

Lesson Introduction: Imagine that _____ (name one of your own students) had come to school this morning and told us about a fire that broke out last evening. Can you imagine him talking like this?

Last evening after the chores were done, we were ready to go into the house. But Father said, "What do I smell?" He thought it came from the silo, so he started climbing up the silo. When he was halfway up, he knew the silage was on fire. He called the fire department. Soon the firemen came and put out the fire, and before long everything was back to normal.

No one would tell that kind of story in such a manner. Yet students sometimes *write* like this. What excitement must have been a part of this experience! But how poorly that excitement is shown! In fact, the story really does not *show* much at all; it merely



tells. Using a good style calls the writer to *show* the characters and events in a story.

Lesson Outline:

1. *In a story, use dialogue that sounds natural.*

- Write quotations with contractions and incomplete sentences.
- Change speakers frequently. Begin a new paragraph each time a different person begins to speak.
- Use descriptive explanatory words.
- Avoid quotations with poor grammar and slang.