Creative Writing Assignment: Dialogue

For this writing assignment, you are asked to create a short story made up primarily of dialogue. You may write about your own lived experience and EMBELLISH or experiment with invention/fiction, but if you write about real people, please change the names. (You would not want to share more than someone is comfortable having you share.) **Your goal is to write dialogue that sounds realistic so that the reader can picture it well in her mind. This means using contractions, slang, and perhaps even incorrect grammar in order to best portray your characters.**

Your goal is to write a 2-5 page scene involving at least two characters—and you want to let your reader hear, see, and feel what the characters are going through. Think of this assignment as a SCENE, in which you bring your reader right into the moment. Let your ending be an epiphany (sudden realization) or cliffhanger—or try looping back to the opening.

**Tip:** Inner monologue can add a powerful element to dialogue writing—and if you include unspoken thoughts, please set them off by using italics.

**Prewriting Ideas:**

- Go to a coffee shop or restaurant and observe the people around you. (Yes, creative writing is a permission slip for eavesdropping!) Start your story with what you know and then fill in the details using your imagination.
- Think about times in your life when you’ve said, “I can’t believe I said that!” or “Do you believe (s)he just said that?!” These moments may work well for a dialogue story!
- Using a mind map or list, write down three to five people with whom you have had some humorous or thought-provoking conversations.
  - Next to each person’s name, jot down some notes about the most memorable conversations.
  - You may even consider funny, shocking or unusual conversations you have overheard.
  - Consider choosing one that changed the way you think, or changed the way you saw someone.
  - Consider choosing one that took a while to reveal something. Maybe you learned something new from the conversation.
  - Humor is okay as long as you think your readers in this class will also see the humor in the situation.

**Key Creative Writing Skills:**

- Develop realistic and readable dialogue
- Punctuate dialogue correctly
Dialogue Paper Evaluation

Clear context for the event or moment
- Situation (who, what, where, when) is made clear
- Opening is engaging

Clear focus on the event or moment
- Focus is narrow and clear
- Writing does not wander or share irrelevant back story

Voice and tone
- Voice and dialogue is engaging and conveys emotion
- Dialogue is natural; the reader can “hear” characters talking

Final draft quality
- Author has taken care to polish paper in areas of punctuation, spelling, grammar, paragraphing, etc.
- Speech tags are appropriate

___ / 40 Total