

Sample Instrument Dialogue

“Good day!” chirped the flute.

“No, it’s not,” moaned the tuba. “I think it stinks!”

“Birds are singing, bees are buzzing, and the sun is shining brightly,” trilled the flute. “Why are you so sad?”

“Why are you so happy?” boomed the tuba. “Just go away!”

Rules for Writing Dialogue:

1. Quotation marks are used in dialogue (conversations) around words that a character said out loud.

Example: “Good day!” chirped the flute.

2. Each time a new character begins to speak, he or she gets a new paragraph.

Example: “Good day!” chirped the flute.

“What’s so good about it?” moaned the tuba. “I think it stinks!”

3. Commas, exclamation points, periods, and question marks are placed inside quotation marks. A period or other end mark goes at the end of the whole sentence.

Example: “No it’s not,” moaned the tuba. “I think it stinks!”



“Be Mine, Hot Stuff,” Said the Spoon to the Soup



In a Nutshell

Conversation hearts are a Valentine’s Day tradition, but using them to write inanimate-object love stories is the last thing your students will expect. In fact, your students will be so flustered, they’ll forget to complain about practicing their **dialogue-writing** skills!

Teacher Bonus: This activity can replace those old Valentine’s Day crosswords and word searches. It’s a holiday lesson with some real teaching power.

Plan Ahead

- ✍ Each student will need glue, markers, a large piece of construction paper, and a small box or bag of conversation hearts.
- ✍ Reproduce 1 overhead transparency of Sample Instrument Dialogue (page 43). *Hint: The rules for punctuating dialogue are many. Still, kids love to put dialogue in their stories, so it’s a skill worth teaching and re-teaching. Just don’t expect mastery on the first try!*

How It Works

Introduce this activity by telling your students that they get to write love stories in honor of the most romantic day of the year. You could even play this up by putting on a CD of romantic music and using your most mushy, gushy voice. Most likely, your students will begin to groan and gag. That’s when you tell them not to worry. These will be silly love stories between inanimate, or non-living, objects, like a pencil and an eraser or a tube of toothpaste and a toothbrush. Then, begin handing out the bags of conversation hearts, and their feelings of dread will turn to excitement.

Students will first read each conversation heart in their stash. They will then use those words and phrases as inspiration for choosing two inanimate objects to be characters in a love dialogue. The words on the candy will be used in the conversations between the objects. (To ensure that students write a full story, require a specific number of candies to be used in the stories. Encourage students to trade hearts with classmates, if needed.)

Review the Sample Instrument Dialogue overhead transparency (page 43). Leave the overhead up as a resource for students to use during writing.

When students have chosen their characters and the candies they plan to use, they can begin writing with markers on the construction paper. As they write, they will glue the candy hearts where the words and phrases fit into the conversation. (*Hint: For this assignment, a rough draft really takes the fun out of using the candy hearts and turns a quick holiday activity into a multi-day project. Encourage students to plan their stories in their minds and work slowly to do their best the first time.*)

The finished products will make a colorful Valentine’s Day bulletin board.

Differentiation Tip

To help students organize their ideas for writing, have them line up their candy hearts in the order they plan to use them in their stories.