

1.1 Pip and Pep Discuss the Finer Points of Dialogues

Pip and Pep are two high school science teachers who LOVE science. Even as best friends growing up, it seemed that they were always discussing the wonders of science. Now that they are both science teachers, their love for science has only grown (isn't that a heart-warming story?! We find our pair of extremely enthusiastic educators at the event of the year—the State Science Teachers Conference.

Pep: *[looking around at the room]* Wow, Pip...this conference is really impressive. Everything is so...**professional!** But...what are all these people doing here?

Pip: *[rolls eyes]* Pep...these people are here to hear us talk about dialogues, remember?

Pep: What?!?! You told me we were coming here for pizza and soda! I don't remember you saying anything about a presentation!

Pip: Now calm down, Pep. You know this stuff! We're just going to talk about using dialogues in science class.

Pep: Oh, science! I could talk about science all day. You know that there are two kinds of teachers, right?

Pip: Uh...elementary and secondary? *[looks at Pep questioningly]*

Pep: Noooo...science teachers and teachers who WISH they were science teachers!

Pip: I'm sure you believe that, Pep. But let's stick to the topic—dialogues! I suppose we should begin by telling everyone what dialogues are.

Pep: That's probably a good place to start. A dialogue is a scripted discussion about... well, **anything!** It's really just a mini-play *[dramatically]*... **a drama !... a comedy !... a tragedy!**

Pip: *[under her breath]* Talk about drama...

Pep: I love to use dialogues in the classroom to **preview** a unit and give the students an overview of the topic...and to get them excited about the upcoming material.

Pip: I also like to use dialogues **during** the unit to reinforce learning and to check for understanding. Using them at the **end** of the unit is a great way to summarize the material and wrap it all up. I can focus my students on the things they should have learned!

Pep: That's right! And, dialogues have an esteemed history as an educational tool—they were used by great scientists and teachers such as Plato and Galileo.

Pip: Dialogues are so useful in the classroom. The science-y students love the content and the humor of a well-written dialogue.

Pep: And the English lit/drama kids love it because it's like a mini-play. They get to act it out and be all drama-y!

Pip: I like dialogues because they get every student involved in the discussion. You know how you always have those really quiet students who just don't want to talk?

Pep: *[nostalgically]* Yeah...I was one of those.

Pip: What?!? Pep, remember me? We went to school together...you were NEVER one of those kids! Usually, the teacher couldn't get you to **stop** talking!

Pep: Well... we'll just have to agree to disagree on that point.

Pip: *[rolls her eyes]* Sure, Pep. Anyway, dialogues give **those** students a chance to participate anonymously—since everyone in the room is talking at the same time, no one really stands out.

Pep: That's right! Dialogues give students a chance to practice their reading skills in a non-threatening environment. Just about every one of my students seriously needs practice with reading.

Pip: You said it! And the great thing is that, when they are done, they have a note sheet. Since I wrote it, I am sure that the material is correct and focuses on the points that I feel are important.

Pep: And, it's so much more personal than something from a textbook. And...no offense to the hard-working textbook authors...it's **a lot** more fun to read.

Pip: Right you are! I insert references to local places and people to make it more individualized. For example, using the local burger joint or ice cream shop as a setting gives my students a personal link to the dialogue.

Pep: Absolutely! I often put something in there that refers to events at school...or to the fact that I'm such an incredibly interesting, funny, and hard-working teacher!

Pip: *[not convinced]* Uh huh...anyway, dialogues are such a useful educational tool for the classroom, it will be easy to talk about how to use them effectively with students.

Pep: OK...fine...you've convinced me. I'll do the presentation with you. But you still owe me pizza and soda afterward!

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