Don't Just Stand There Yapping, Do Something!

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Kernels of Wisdom: The Stories Around Us
November 2, 2019

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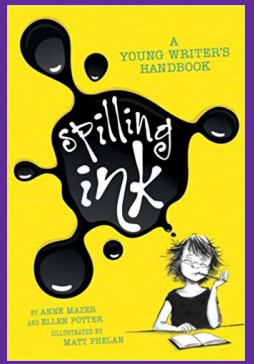
Thanks to authors Anne Mazer and Ellen Potter



Pixar's *Up* - Meet Russell

Video Link

Turn and Talk

- What specific actions, expressions, and gestures did you notice?
- How did each one affect your emotions and connection with the character?

Pixar's *Up*

Body Language

- Reveals the character's true nature because it's often done unconsciously
- Captures the subtext of what's really happening underneath the dialogue

Pixar's *Up*

Authentic Characters

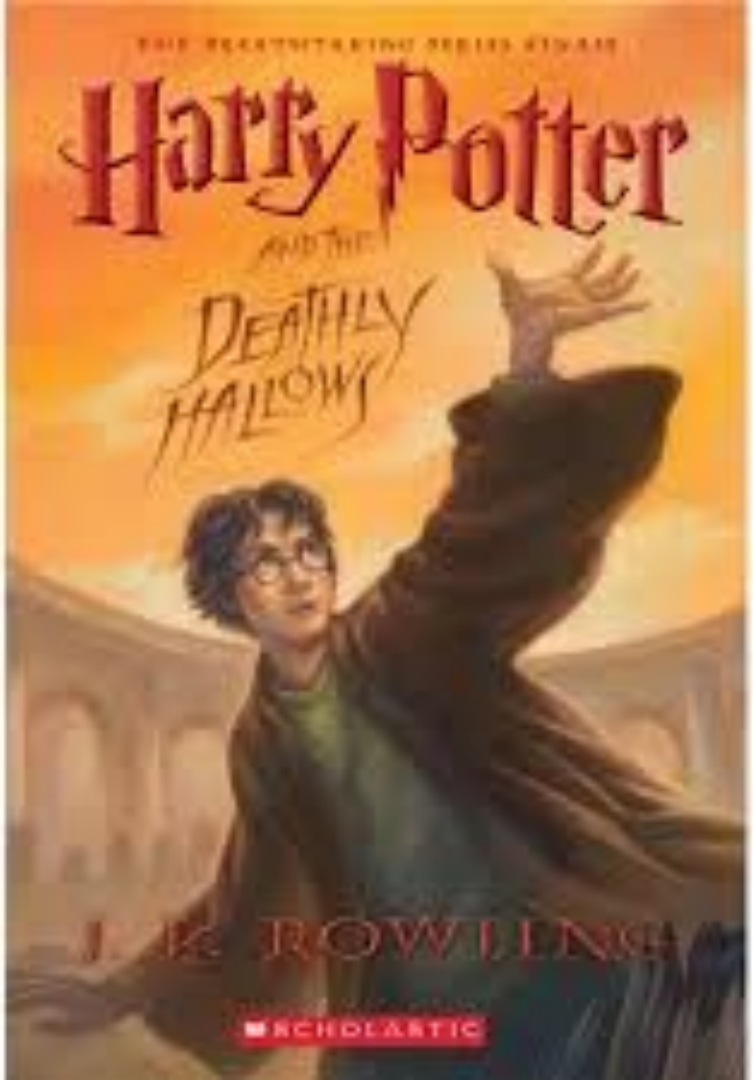
Characters come to life when they live wholeheartedly, having:

- The courage to be imperfect;
- The compassion to be kind to themselves and others;
- Connections as a result of authenticity; and
- A full embrace of vulnerability.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

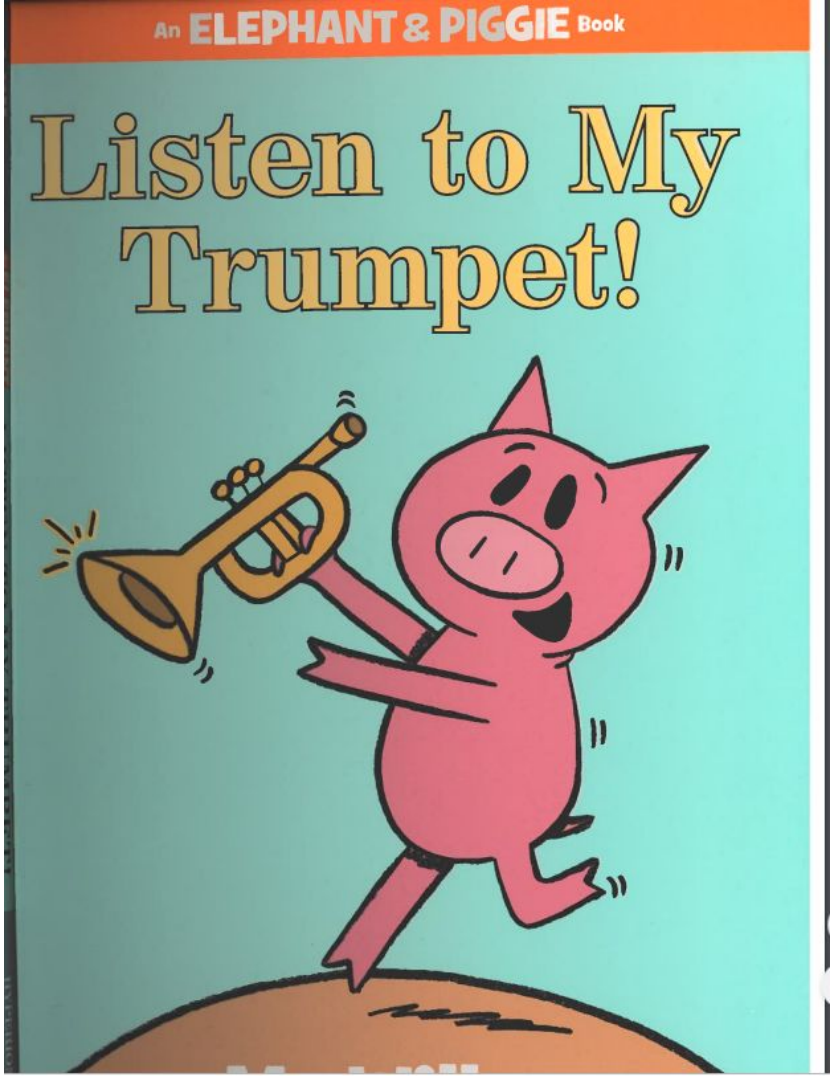
Cunningham, K.E. (2015). *Story: Still the heart of literacy learning*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

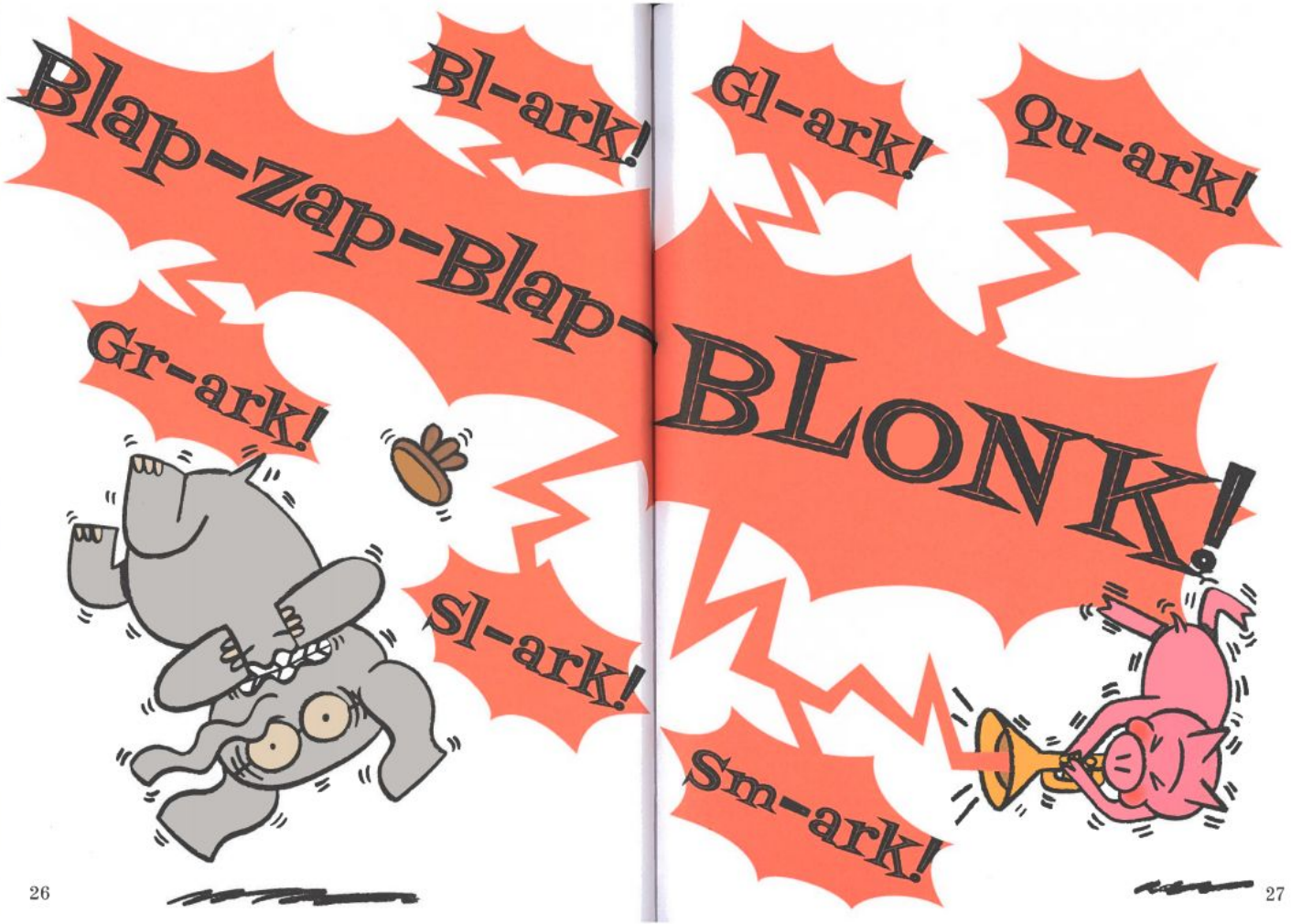
From *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by J.K. Rowling

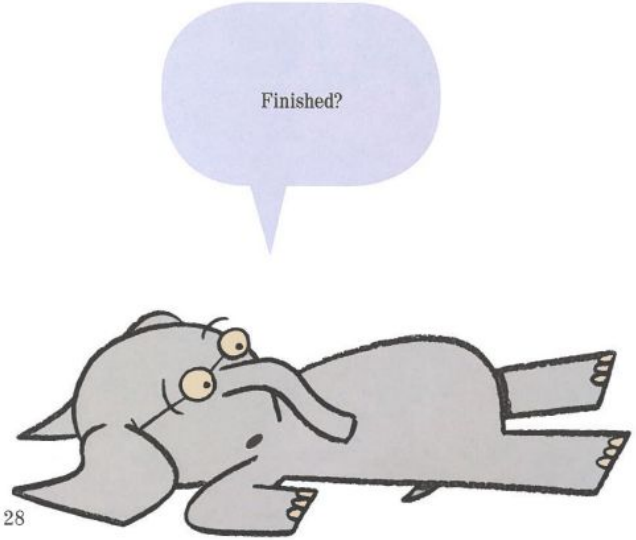


Listen to My Trumpet

By Mo Willems



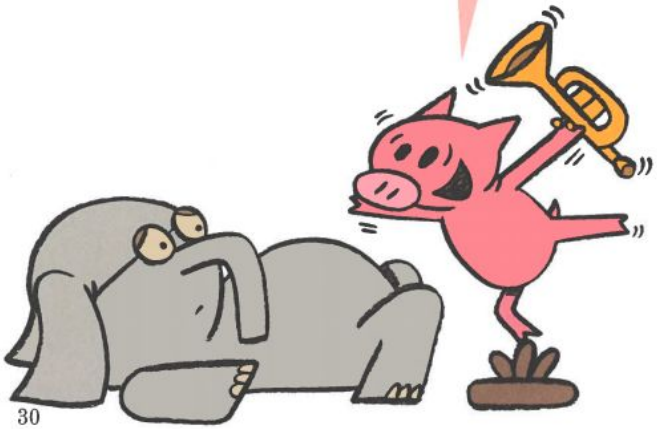

Blap-Zap-Blap-
Bl-ark!
Gr-ark!
Sl-ark!
Gl-ark!
Qu-ark!
BLONK!
Sm-ark!

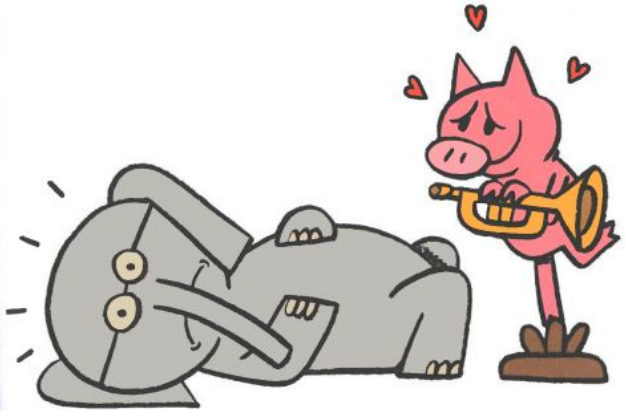


Finished!

So?!

What do you think of my trumpet?





Student Example

“Stupid” by Alexandra Xuan

Written for a Power of the Pen team practice in 2014

Pair Actions With Words

To reinforce what your character is saying with a visual:

“This is really hard for me to say to you.” Robert looked away while he gnawed at his thumbnail.

or

“There has got to be a toilet somewhere in this mall,” Anna said, walking swiftly with an anxious look in her eye.

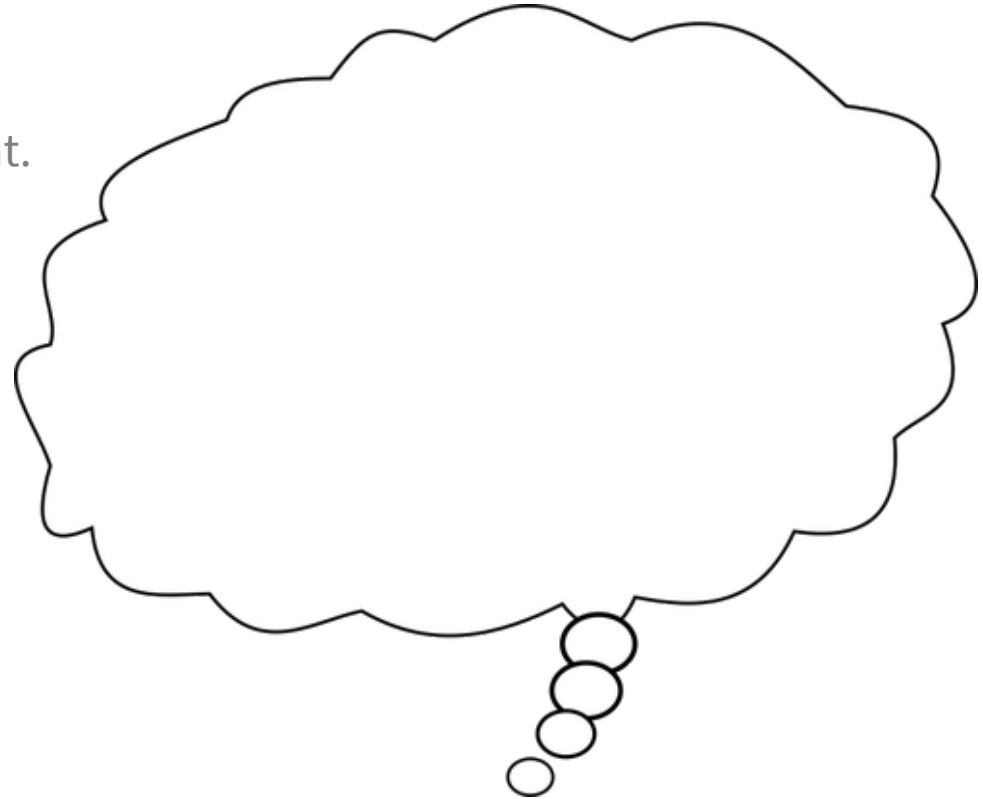
Mazer, A., & Potter, E. *Spilling ink: A young writer’s handbook*. New York, NY: Roaring Brook.

Brainstorm

Think of a character expressing something with emotional weight.

What might they say or do to reinforce the emotion?

What might the character’s face look like?



Pair Actions With Words

To show a character being less than truthful:

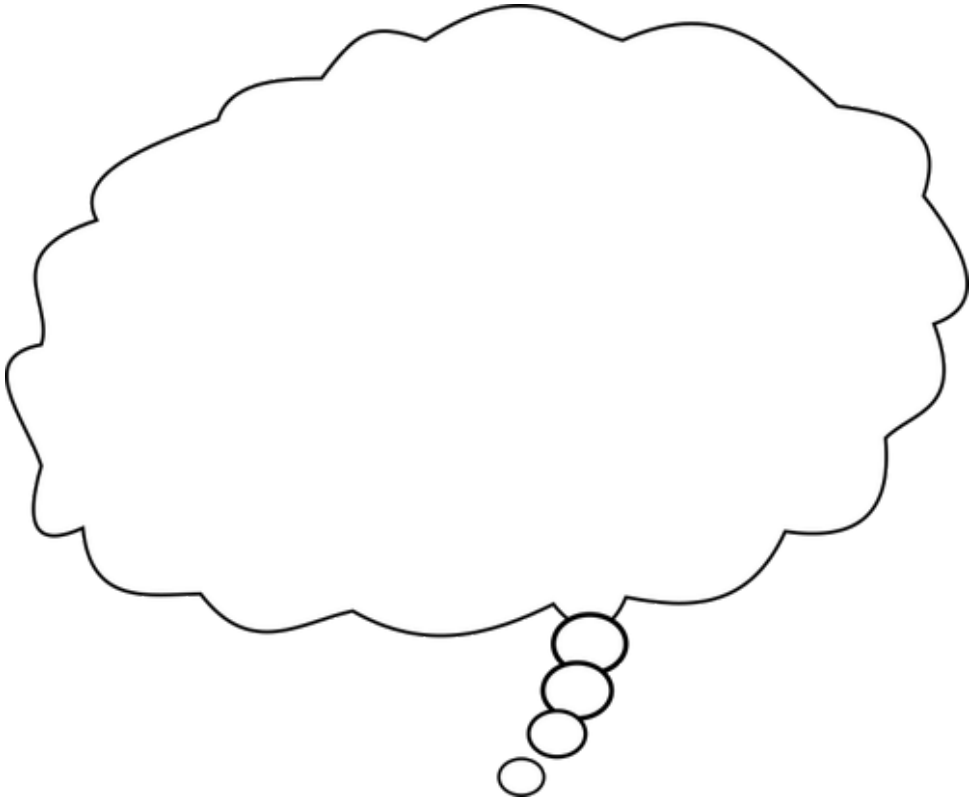
"Tell me the truth, Todd. How bad is this leg?" Ron asked.

"Lie still, I'll take a look." With his back turned to Ron, he rolled up Ron's pants leg, then grimaced with horror. "It's not that bad," he said.

Mazer, A., & Potter, E. *Spilling ink: A young writer's handbook*. New York, NY: Roaring Brook.

Brainstorm

List behaviors people might exhibit when they are being dishonest.



Pair Actions With Words

To show a character avoiding a topic:

"Was Jared at the party?" Lucy asked as they sat by the edge of the pool.

Melissa suddenly slipped into the water and began swimming. Lucy paused for a few minutes, squinting at her friend suspiciously before she picked up an inflatable turtle and slapped it on Melissa's head as she came up for air.

"Hey, what was that for?" Melissa said.

"I asked you a question."

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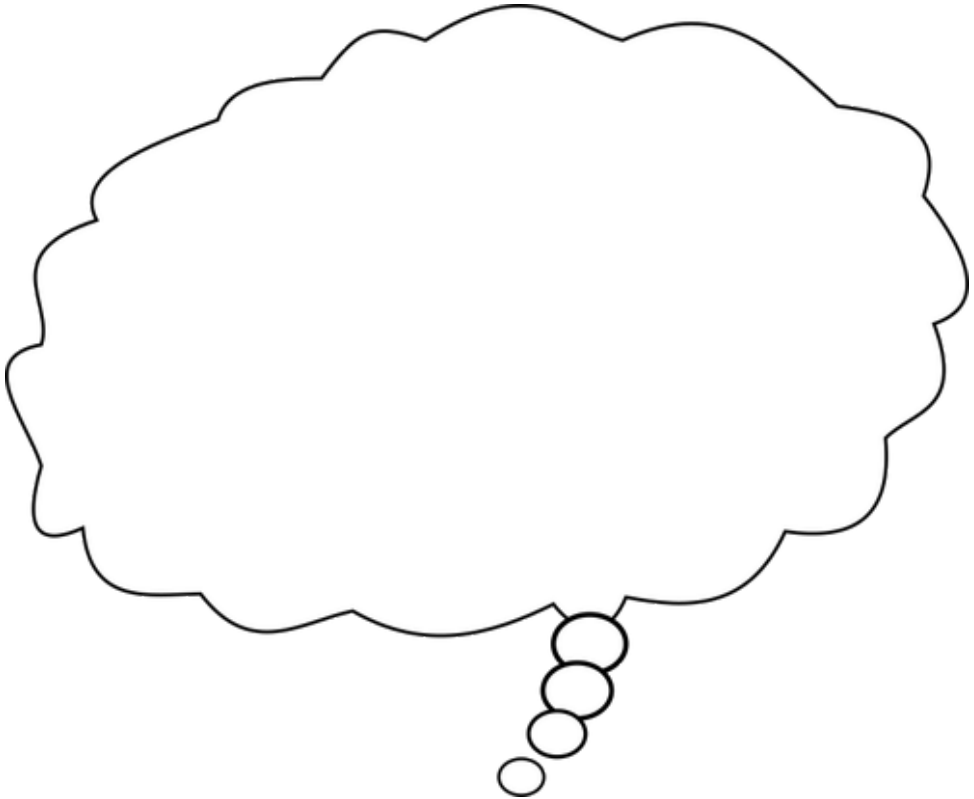
Brainstorm

Think of a setting.

What actions might someone take in this setting to avoid a conversation?

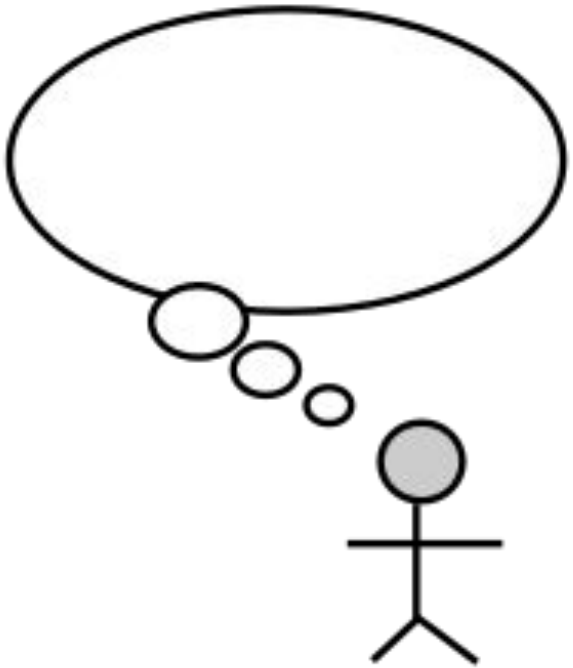


Try It!

- Write dialogue for one of the following scenarios, or develop your own scene:
  - Write dialogue in which one character tries to persuade another character to do something he or she does not want to do.
  - The person the main character has a crush on just stopped to talk to the main character.
  - A character is trying to persuade parents to give permission to do something.

Takeaway

Please write one takeaway from today's session.

Thank you!

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