

LET'S CHAT

about

DIALOGUE

2 EASY Ways
to

Eliminate
WORDINESS

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LET'S CHAT ABOUT DIALOGUE

DOES YOUR DIALOGUE RAMBLE?

Here are two ways to eliminate some of the wordiness of our dialogue and focus in on the information that we are trying to impart to our reader:

1. Keep the dialogue focused on the subject of the scene - too often writer's stray off topic and we lose the reader.
2. Choose fewer and better words. Take out unnecessary words and sentences.

In this example we have a lot of conversation that does not need to be here. Brad and Maggie are at a restaurant and having a conversation.

The main idea is to introduce Brad's success in investments and his reason for being a cop:

“How was your soccer game?” Brad asked as he stuffed a piece of bruschetta into his mouth.

“We won, three to two, but it wasn't easy. There was even a fight—hockey has nothing on women’s soccer. We’re in the Canada West finals. If we win, we’re eligible to go to the nationals in Montreal.

“That’s great. That will be a fun trip.”

Maggie smiled. “I can hardly wait. How was your game?”

“It was good. We won, twenty-seven to seventeen.”

“Have you played a lot of football?”

“Yeah. Since grade nine. Then high school and university.”

“You played university football. Cool. What did you take?”

“Well, I didn’t get a scholarship like some. My parents insisted I go to university. Dad worked hard all his life and insisted that I get a degree, so I’d be set financially. But I wanted to be a cop. I lost, and I studied

economics.”

“That sounds boring.”

“It was. I was barely passing. I wrote one paper in my third year on investing. The professor hated it and gave me a C-minus. The thing is, my theories worked and I’ve done pretty well with investing.”

“That’s funny. So you have a degree in economics?”

“A degree in criminal law and a minor in economics.”

“You’re a lawyer too. So then why are you a cop?”

“I went to university so I’d be financially stable. With investments, I am. So now I can do what I want, and I want to be a cop.”

“And you still play football? What do you play?”

“Defence. We have a pretty good team. We have three brothers who are good football players. They’re fire fighters, but we don’t hold that against them. They play offense.”

AND HERE IS THE EDITED VERSION:

“How was your game?” Maggie asked.

“We won, twenty-seven to seventeen.”

“Have you played a lot of football?”

“Since grade nine. High school and university.”

“University?”

“My parents insisted I go to university and study economics so I’d be set financially. But I’ve always wanted to be a cop.”

“So you have a degree in economics?”

“A degree in criminal law and a minor in economics.”

“So, if you can be a lawyer, then why are you a cop?”

“I had some success in investments, so I can do what I want; and I want to be a cop.”

Okay, you get the idea.

Do you see how much easier this second version reads? Get to the point of the conversation. If you don't the reader will put down your story.



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