

## **ON DIALOGUE AND VOICE**

**"Writing is listening."**

*--Attributed to Robert Frost*



## Writing Tip 9

## Listen to how people actually talk.

**Activity:** Eavesdrop (ethically) on a real conversation and turn it into a fictional scene.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal black ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Writing Tip 10

**Give each character a distinct voice.**

**Activity:** Write one line of dialogue from three different characters reacting to the same situation (e.g., a strange noise in the dark). Make each one distinctly different.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Bonus Tip:** Remove the dialogue tags. Can you still tell who's speaking? If so, you've nailed it.

# NOTES ON STRUCTURE

[illegible]

## ON REVISION AND EDITING

"The difference between the almost right word  
and the right word is the difference between  
the lightening bug and the lightening."

*--Mark Twain*

## Writing Tip 17

## Tighten and strengthen your prose.

**Activity:** Take one chapter or scene. Count the total number of words. Now, cut 10%. List the words or phrases you cut below. Is there a pattern?

**Bonus tip:** Hemingway used his “Cut 10%” rule religiously. He said strong writing “cuts to the bone.”

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Writing Tip 18

## Step away before you edit.

**Activity:** Write a one- or two-sentence summary of your story below. Then reread the draft. How close is your summary to the actual draft.

[illegible]



## ON DESCRIPTION AND NAMING

"Don't tell me the moon is  
shining; show me the glint of light on  
broken glass."

*--Anton Chekhov*



## Writing Tip 29

## Use the five senses to anchor emotion.

**Activity:** Pick an emotion (fear, anger, jealousy).

Describe how a character might react to that emotion, using only the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch.

[illegible]