

# Writing Dialogue / Dramatic Scripts



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# The Question

- ❖ Read the question carefully, underlining key words.
- ❖ **How many** people will be speaking?
- ❖ Do you know anything about these **characters**?
- ❖ What **topic or topics** are to be discussed?



# Layout

- ❖ The speaker's name should be followed by a colon and then their piece of the dialogue.
- ❖ Move on to a new line for each speaker.
- ❖ See below for an example.
- ❖ **Frank: What took you so long?**
- ❖ **Maura: The traffic was awful. I was stuck on the main road for nearly forty minutes.**
- ❖ There is no need for inverted commas around the spoken words.
- ❖ If the characters' names are long, you may wish to abbreviate them after the first use.



# Structure and Content

- ❖ Make sure you have taken a few moments to plan your dialogue. You should know how it will end, and it should end naturally and in a believable manner.
- ❖ At the planning stage, check that you have included all the aspects of the task.

# Register and Characterisation

- ❖ What do you know about your characters?
- ❖ How would they be likely to speak?
- ❖ Would all the characters speak in the same way or would some be more formal / polite / educated than others?
- ❖ You may use slang if necessary, but avoid bad language at all costs.





# Sample Answer

- ❖ The next slide is a screenshot of my sample answer for the Edco Sample Paper A - Q 13. It is based on a passage by Nell McCafferty in which a young boy named Jimmy is in court for a number of offences. His parents are not together and have refused to come to court. Jimmy left home when his father left and now stays with a friend who is also in trouble with the police.
- ❖ The answer reflects the information presented in the passage.
- ❖ The answer is an attempt to show an understanding of the fact that people can speak in different registers. The parents' grammar is poor - 'meself' - and their attitude is dismissive. This fits in with what we have learned in the passage. The Garda speaks more formally and correctly. He is doing his job and is not provoked to an emotional response by the parents' comments.

Father: What are you doing here? Is it Jimmy? That little brat better not be in trouble again!

Guard: I've only come to remind you that Jimmy is due in court next week and to check that you will be there.

Mother: I'm not well. I can't be dragging meself into court every time that little so-and-so gets caught.

Father: The thing is, guard, it's all a bit tricky. Me and her aren't even together any more. I only came round to get some of me bits and pieces. Can't see the point of going to court when I'm not even living here with the lad.

Guard: I have to tell you that it will look much better in court if at least one of you is there with Jimmy.

Father: Talk to the missus. I'm done with him. Lost cause, if you ask me. He's better off in care.

Mother: Yeah. I can barely take care of meself. Jimmy's never here, anyway. Spends all his nights with that no-good friend of his. Sooner the pair of them are locked up, the better.

Guard: Well, as I said, I'd strongly advise that one or both of you attend court with your son.

Father: Nah. I won't be there anyhow. No point.

Mother: Me neither. Can't stand here on the doorstep all day. Go on and bother someone else, guard. I've wasted enough time talking to you already.

Guard: Well, I'll leave you so, but please at least think about what I've said.