English 2201

***Narrative Writing*** Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Writing Exercises***

***WRITING DIALOGUE (Dialogue is not necessary in your narrative, but used well, can add***

***to character, atmosphere and plot development – best used sparingly.)***

**∙** Dialogue must be fitted to the person using it and thus help to develop character.

∙ It must be natural. You wouldn’t really say: *“Hi Joe. I’m so glad to see you’re not working at the wastewater treatment plant today. I suppose that’s because of the beautiful, but unusual 24 degree weather on this spring day in Newfoundland.”*

∙ It must hold the reader’s interest by revealing information interesting in itself.

∙ Should not be repetitious or monotonous; SOMETIMES substitute synonyms for “he said” or “she said”. *Examples: coaxed, denied, exclaimed, implored, mimicked, murmured, pleaded, retorted, roared, sighed, stammered, warned, whispered.*

∙ May use “stage directions” to indicate the manner and mood of the dialogue.

*Example: “As I said,” he complained bitterly, “ they would never carry out their promises*.”

**The Punctuation and Format of Dialogue**

1. Make a new paragraph every time the speaker changes
2. Begin each speech with a capital letter
3. Enclose each speech in quotation marks. Note particularly that each part of a divided speech is enclosed in its own set of quotation marks.

*Note each of the following examples*:

The “tag” comes first.

*Dick asked, “What is that noise?”*

*Ted whispered back, “It’s probably a bear, but it won’t harm us.”*

The “tag” comes last

*“A bear!” he shouted.*

*“Be quiet, Dick, or he’ll come here to investigate,” cautioned Ted.*

The “tag” in the middle of a one-sentence quotation

*“But*,” *argued Dick, “didn’t we tie the tent flaps securely?”*

The “tag” is between two sentences

*“Don’t be silly,” replied Ted. “Do you think a tent flap will keep out a curious bear?”*

**A.Add all necessary punctuation marks in the following sentences.**

1. Elliott asked when are you planning to go down to the cabin Archie my wife wants to send in some supplies.
2. You don’t believe that, do you challenged the police officer.
3. Then why demanded the teacher in an icy voice have you not done your homework.

**B.Punctuate the following dialogue correctly. Underline all effective “stage directions”.**

*Are you going to have the decency to answer my question, or aren’t you?*

*What question? Her vibrating voice was low and restrained.*

*Will you write to your people?*

*For money? The sarcasm in her tone was diabolical.*

*Will you write to your people? He demanded yet again, emphasizing and separating each word.*

*No, she said shortly, with terrible disdain.*

*Why not?*

*Because I won’t. The curling line of her lips, as they closed on each other said all the rest; all the*

*cruel truths about his unspeakable, inane, coarse follies, his laziness, his excesses, his lies . . .*

**C. When writing dialogue, AND throughout your narrative, try to avoid using too many “ly” adverbs. Once again, don’t always tell, sometimes SHOW the emotion through action.**

**Example: Telling:** *“Stop it!” Joanna demanded angrily.*

**Showing:** *“Stop it!” Joanna demanded, slamming her palm onto the table. The china cup fell off the edge and shattered. She didn’t notice.*

**Provide action to SHOW the following:**

1. “And what brings you to town?” Ginny asked flirtatiously. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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2. “I don’t understand what you mean,” the boy answered nervously. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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***HOW DO I BEGIN?*** – **A few suggestions for opening your story.**

**A. Can you identify the opening technique for each of the following pairs?**

*The moon shone dully through the hazy sky, and the ineffective street lights only made the evening more eerie. I had been running breathlessly.*

The first frost had turned the grass to brown and the birds had flown south. The woods around the cabin was silent except for the outrageous crunch of my feet in the dry undergrowth . . .

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*At the next turn I stopped short. There, blocking the narrow mossy trail, lay a bear, licking his huge paws . . .*

*My very first job interview was set for 4:30 in the afternoon. I climbed two flights of stairs and struggled with the heavy glass door . . .*

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*I was aware of the man before he sat next to me. He had* *an old man’s smell; clean enough, but with the lavender sweetness of age. The man was* very *old – even his wrinkles had wrinkles. But his eyes were sharp, blue and not old at all.*

*The door opened quietly, and my good friend entered. Her tall, thin stature was familiar, but today she was pale, as if sick. And her eyes were dark and sad.*

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*“Cathy” my father gasped to my mother, “do you remember that Pillsbury recipe contest that you entered a few months ago? Look at this! You won first prize . . .”*

*“Patrick, what’s the matter with you lately?” my mother queried, her hands on her hips.*

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*I knew the thieves couldn’t do that with their bare hands. They must have used a crowbar. My mind was whirling. How could they bend my locker door off the hinges without being heard?*

*I couldn’t believe I had missed the plane. Why hadn’t I told the waiter I was in a hurry? The tournament would be over in four hours . . .*

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**B*.* Based on techniques shown above, write two possible opening sentences for the following:**

***Joe walks into a diner. He is the lone customer. He notices that the waitress is acting strangely.***

***Then he notices a shadow extending from behind the counter. Someone is hiding there.***

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