

LESSONS 55 THROUGH 58: *Editing Practice*

Correct the following selection from the book, The Testimony of Charlie Coulson - Drummer Boy at Gettysburg, by M. L. Rossvally (published by Queen Homeschool Supplies, Inc.), correcting any errors you come across in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or usage. Do one section each day for the next four days.

Five days after I had amputated that dear boys arm and leg, he sent for me, and it was from him that I heard the first Gospel sermon. "Doctor," he said, "My time has come. I do not expect to see another sun rise, but, thank God, I am ready to go, and before I die, I desire to thank you with all my heart for your kindness to me. Doctor, you are a jew - you do not believe in Jesus; will you please stand here and see me die, trusting my savior to the last moment of my life?"

I tried to stay, but I could not, for I had not the courage to stand by and see a christian boy die rejoicing in the love of that Jesus whom I had been taught to hate. So I hurriedly left the room. About twenty minutes later a steward who found me sitting in my private office covering my face with my hand said, "doctor, Charlie Coulson wishes to see you."

"I have just seen him," I answered, "And I cannot see him again."

"But, doctor, he says he must see you once more before he dyes."

I made up my mind to see him; say an endearing word, and let him die; but I was determined that no word of his should influence me in the least so far as his Jesus was concerned. When I entered the hospital, I saw he was sinking fast, so I sat down by his bed. Asking me to take his hand, he said, "Doctor, I love you because you are a Jew; the best FRIEND I have found in this world was a Jew."

I asked, "Who was that."

He answered, Jesus Christ, to whom I want to introduce you before I die; and will you promise me, doctor, that what I am about to say to you, you will never forget?

I promised, and he said, "Five days ago, while you amputated my arm and leg, I prayed to the lord Jesus Christ to save your soul."

(tomorrow's lesson is on the next page)

These words cut deep into my heart. I could not understand how, while I was causing him the most intense pain; he could forget all about himself, and think of nothing but this savior and my unconverted state. All I could say to him was, “Well, my dear boy you will soon be all right.” With these words I left him, and twelve minutes later he fell asleep, “Safe in the arms of Jesus.”

Hundreds, of soldiers died in my hospital during the War, but I only followed one to the grave - that one was Charlie Coulson, the drummer boy. I rode three miles to see him buried. I had him dressed in a new uniform; and placed in an Officer’s coffin with a new United States flag over it.

LESSON 59: *Critiquing Your Dialog*

Dialog is an important part of any story, and can truly “make or break” the story line. Look back to lesson 51, where you wrote a conversation between two characters. Now, you are going to look at that dialog from the perspective of the *reader* instead of the *writer*. Looking over the conversation you wrote in lesson 51, answer the following questions:

1. Does the dialog between the characters you created give any insight into the personalities, opinions, convictions, or beliefs of your characters?
2. Does it add interest to the story line, or is it just “flat,” space-filling conversation?
3. Does the conversation sound the way people normally speak, or does it sound stiff and forced?

If you can see, after looking objectively at the dialog you wrote in lesson 51, the need to make changes to the dialog to make it sound better, then rewrite the same dialog with those added improvements on the blank page to your left.

LESSON 60: *Showing Feeling Through Dialog*

While most of the time, you will use the word, “said” to show that a character is speaking, such as “Annie said,” you can also use a different word to show just how the character is feeling when speaking. Look at the examples below:

“I can’t wait!” David exclaimed.

“But Daddy,” interrupted Sarah.

“Praise the Lord!” rejoiced Meghan.

You can also use adjectives and adverbs to show just *how* a character responds, as in the examples that follow.

“I can’t wait!” David exclaimed excitedly.
“But Daddy,” interrupted Sarah impatiently.
“Praise the Lord!” rejoiced Meghan happily.

Do you see how these additions add insight into the character’s feelings as they are speaking? On the blank page to your left, rewrite the following sentences, changing the word, “said” into something that shows more feeling, and using adjectives or adverbs to show even more.

1. “I can’t believe it,” said Toby.
2. “We cannot go,” said Andrea.
3. “Wait a minute,” said James.
4. “I am coming,” said Eli.
5. “That can’t be true,” said Paul.

LESSON 61: *Showing Action Through Dialog*

Interesting dialog can give us even more insight into the character’s life, as well as the story line, by showing what the character is doing while they are speaking. Look at the example that follows. First, a plain, boring dialog between two brothers:

“What are you doing?” asked Travis.
“Oh, just having some fun,” answered Jake.
“Mind if I join you?” Travis questioned.
“Not at all!” responded Jake.

Now, look at this same conversation with a little action added:

“What are you doing?” asked Travis, as he entered the bedroom, catching his brother off guard.

“Oh, just having some fun,” answered Jake, jumping up and down on his new king-sized bed.

“Mind if I join you?” Travis questioned, grabbing his brother by the ankle and knocking him flat on his face on the mattress.

“Not at all,” responded Jake, scrambling to pin his brother in a wrestling hold.

Hear the difference a little action makes? Now it’s your turn! Rewrite the

following conversation on the blank page to your left, adding some action to make it more interesting.

“Look at that dog!” exclaimed Nathan.

“I’ve seen that dog before,” responded Tadziu.

“I was thinking the same thing,” said Nathan.

“Wait a minute! That’s the dog that is always chained up by the house on top of the hill,” remembered Tadziu.

“He’s headed right for the highway!” exclaimed Nathan.

“Come on, let’s see if we can catch him!” shouted Tadziu.

Now, compare the original conversation with the one you rewrote. Which example gives us more insight into the story line between these two boys? Remember the importance of adding a little action within your dialog sequences. It sure makes the conversation more insightful!

LESSON 62: *Properly Written Dialog*

There are some basic rules to follow when writing a dialog. They are:

1. Every time a new speaker is introduced, his words must be indented, as well as enclosed in quotation marks. “New speaker” does not just mean a person introduced into the conversation for the first time; rather, every time the conversation switches back and forth from one character to another, they are considered “new speakers,” and their words need to follow this rule.
2. Place punctuation marks, such as commas and final periods, inside the set of double quotation marks surrounding each character’s words. See the example written above to see what I mean.
3. If a speaker’s words continue for more than one paragraph without being interrupted by another character or other text, do not place quotation marks at the end of any of those paragraphs of speech until the last one.

Simply place the quotation marks at the beginning of each of the paragraphs he is speaking, with the final set of quotation marks at the end of his words.

LESSON 63: *Picture Study*

Study the painting below, titled “Fisherman’s Friend,” by George Swinstead, then answer the questions that follow.



What are the people in the painting doing? What type of day is pictured? What is the mood of the people? What are the approximate ages of the people pictured? What is the approximate time period? How do you know?

LESSON 64: *Creative Writing - Prompted Story Line*

Look back at the painting you studied in yesterday's lesson. On a separate sheet of paper, write a story about the people in this painting, telling about what they are doing in the painting. Be sure to "paint word pictures" with your story, as though the reader does not see the painting, describing the people, scenery, and actions with your words.

Tell who the people are, how they are related, and what they are doing, as well as what happened before and after the moment in the painting.

LESSON 65: *Creative Writing - Prompted Dialog*

Look at the story you wrote yesterday. Today, you will continue this story, but you will further the story line with a dialog between the people in the story. Make up a conversation between the three people that will tell what is going on in the story through their own words. Be sure to follow the principles you learned about in lessons 60 through 62, showing feeling and action, as well as making sure to write the dialog section with the proper rules in indenting, etc.