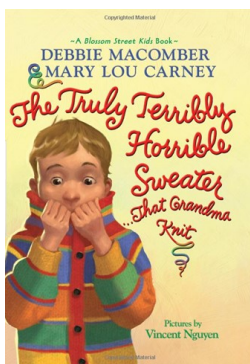# Writing Trait: **Organization**
<u>Lesson Two Learning Intention:</u> learn why and how to use dialogue tags

Writing Leads:
PLO: C1 (organization of personal writing)

"The most important sentence in any article is the first one. If it doesn't induce the reader to proceed to the second sentence, your article is dead" (Zinsser 1985, <u>On Writing Well</u>, p. 65).

After Reading:
Once students have filled out the third chart that will provide them with a problem/solution structure for their own memoir, do a mini-lesson on leads using the first sentence in this book as a model.

Explain to students that the first sentence will either pull your reader in, or convince your reader that it's not worth continuing. Discuss what works in the lead found in this book.

Only three more days until my birthday, Cameron Girard thought as he raced in the door from soccer practice and kicked off his cleats.
Explain that:
1. Because Cameron is thinking, his words are written in italics instead of quotation marks.
2. Explain that the second part of this lead is called the dialogue tag. A tag can add information. In this case, it tells the reader that Cameron has just finished playing soccer. The reader is able to infer that Cameron probably likes soccer. This is considered a showing sentence. The writer could have said, Cameron likes soccer, but good writers know that it's better to show rather than tell. The tag is a great place to sneak in extra information.
3. Activity: Go to the library and using the shelf markers, select a picture book or a novel and look for dialogue tags. Use the following sheet to record some tags that help the reader to better understand a character, or help sneak in extra information. Some tags even move the plot along.
4. Share findings and make a large chart of some really clear examples of dialogue tags.

Story Writing:
Dialogue Tags and what they reveal
Collect dialogue from a variety of sources. Examine the tags to see how they reveal character (C) and move the plot along (P).

By: _____

"We're here!"	shouted Randy as the car pulled into the stadium parking lot.	P
"Get back here!"	commanded the principal as he looked into our guilty eyes and saw our tear stained faces.	C

Story Writing:
Dialogue Leads and Tags

Try writing a few difference dialogue tags on your own. When you're finished, share them with a friend and have a conversation about the best one. Use it as a lead sentence or in the body of your writing.

By: _____

Example: "Please, please, please can we buy these new boots?"	I pleaded as I imagined myself expertly snowboarding my way down the steep mountain slopes.

Exit Slip

How do dialogue openers and dialogue tags help improve your writing:

1. _____
2. _____

What confuses you still?

1. _____

Exit Slip

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