

hi, it's me

...

writing female anti-heroines we root for



sponsored by

The Rebel MFA
Sanctuary



WRITING DIALOGUE FOR ANTI-HEROES

- Capturing Character Voice
- Using Language to Convey Traits
- Writing Exercises



04



Anti-Hero Voice Choice:

- Tone & Attitude
- Bluntness
- Brutal Honesty
- Lack of Filter
- Skepticism/Distrust
- Moral Ambiguity
- Self-Deprecation
- Unconventional Wisdom

How does your anti-heroes **voice** reflect parts of their **personality**, worldview, and belief systems?

It's important to note that these characteristics are **not absolute** for all anti-heroes. Each character will and should be unique and there's **no rule** on how you should or can capture your anti-heroes voice.

CAPTURING THE ANTI-HERO VOICE

A character's voice is not just the way they speak, but also the way they interact with the world around them. It is their thought patterns, their mannerisms, and their unique perspective on the events that unfold around them. Capturing a character's voice is essential for making them feel real and authentic to readers.

When you're writing anti-hero characters, there is always a uniqueness to the way they speak simply because they are unconventional characters.



USING LANGUAGE TO CONVEY CHARACTER TRAITS

In writing, language can be a powerful tool to express the personality and traits of a character. The words a character uses, their tone and delivery, and even their grammar and syntax can all reveal who they are and how they relate to others.

For example, a character who speaks in short, clipped sentences with a monotone voice might come across as cold and detached. On the other hand, a character who speaks with a lot of energy and enthusiasm might seem outgoing and passionate.

Language can also reveal a character's level of education, cultural background, and social status. A character who uses formal language and long, complex sentences might be seen as well-educated and polished, while a character who uses slang and incomplete sentences might be seen as uneducated or rough around the edges.



WRITING EXERCISES

Exercise #1:

1. Use the provided sample OR create your own neutral paragraph between two characters.
2. Rewrite the paragraph from your Anti-Hero's POV, trying to add as much voice and language to convey who they are and what they think in that moment.
3. Then, rewrite the paragraph again from the other character's POV, giving a lot of internal time to how this character is perceiving the anti-hero character.

WRITING EXERCISES

SAMPLE PARAGRAPH:

As they stood by the water cooler, Sarah and Alex began to talk. Sarah commented on the unusually hot weather, Alex agreed with a nod. They talked about their weekend plans, with Sarah mentioning a hiking trip and Alex sharing her excitement for a new movie release. Their conversation meandered through topics of TV shows, favorite restaurants, and recent news. After twenty minutes or so, Sarah lost interest in what Alex was saying and made a comment about getting back to work.

WRITING EXERCISES

Exercise #2:

1. Considering all aspects of your anti-heroes history, upbringing, level of education, natural tendencies, and preferences – write out several different descriptions of how your character uses language and what that tells you about them.

EXAMPLE: Beth Dutton is notorious for using crude and brash language no matter who she is talking to (seriously, she'll say the same thing whether it's her father or some random guy she's sleeping with to get what she wants). Her cutting wit is used against the people she comes up against and even her advice and wisdom is doled out in sardonic humor.

WRITING EXERCISES

BONUS EXERCISE:

Watch this clip (or any clip of your favorite female anti-heroines that you can find) and study it for clues as to how the character displays their personality traits (especially those quirky anti-hero traits). How do they carry themselves? How does the tone of voice change depending on who they're around or does it change at all? How does the character talk to a person less fortunate versus someone who is well-off? While you're watching, try to capture everything you can about how the character's personality comes through.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeD0y0FB3VI>