Voice – The recognizable style of a particular writer or character, composed of syntax, vocabulary, attitude, and tone (Burroway, 2011, p. 382).

Diction- A combination of vocabulary, the words chosen, and syntax, the order in which they are used. Diction will convey not only the facts but also the tone and attitude of the person whose voice speaks to us from the page (Burroway, 2011, p. 377).

Discussion Questions

In small groups discuss the following questions. Be prepared to share what you talked about with the rest of the class.

1. According to Burroway (2011):

> A character's voice comes out of, and can convey, a historical period, a class, a set of circumstances, emotions, and the myriad quirks of typicality and eccentricity. (p. 54)

- What do you think this means?

2. The following excerpt is from the novel, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger. What does the voice of Holden Caulfield tell you about him and the world he lives in?

> If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap … (*The Catcher in the Rye*, J.D. Salinger)

3. Can you think of examples from other novels where the author uses voice to effectively portray a particular time, place, or set of circumstances?

Activity

Write a short character sketch of someone in your family. Write a monologue in which that person tells you an anecdote from his or her childhood (Burroway, 2011, p. 54). Think about how you can use vocabulary and syntax to portray this person.

*Exchange papers with a partner. Read their monologue. Think about the following:

- Can you guess who it is? (mother, father, aunt, sister, brother, cousin, grandparent)
- How do you know? How does diction reveal who this person is?

Burroway, J. (2011). *Imaginative writing: The elements of craft* (3rd ed.). Boston: Longman.