



Point of View in Literature





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College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading:

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

What is point of view?

Point of view is the perspective from which the story is told. When you consider point of view, keep in mind the following questions:

- Who is the **narrator** (person telling the story)?
- Does the narrator change?
If so, when and why?
- Is the narrator **reliable**? Can you trust that he or she is telling the truth?
- What impact does the narrator's point of view have on other elements of the story?



All narratives are told from a particular point of view. Watch this animation to find out about the different ways in which a story can be told.

Press **start** to begin.

start



We can tell if a narrator is using the first or third person by looking at **pronouns**. Press on each excerpt to learn more.

Press **start** to begin.

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Read each excerpt and decide whether it has a first-person or third-person narrator.
Press the answer of your choice.

Press **start** to begin.

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What are some pros and cons of these perspectives?

First-person narrators speak directly to the reader to explain their own thoughts and feelings as the story unfolds. This can make the reader feel sympathetic with the narrator.

In first-person narratives, the reader only knows what the narrator knows. The reader does not know what other characters are thinking, or what events take place when the narrator is not present.

Third-person narratives might make the reader feel more distant from the characters. The reader knows more than the characters do about what is happening in the story.

Why might authors choose to write a first-person or third-person narrative?

In any narrative, different characters have different perspectives on events. Read this excerpt from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. Where the text is highlighted, consider the different perspectives of Tom, Ben and the narrator at that point in the text. Press the highlighted text for more information.

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What is the effect of these different perspectives?



Dramatic irony occurs when the reader understands a situation in the story, but a character does not.

Even if you are not familiar with the term, you have probably experienced dramatic irony.

Think about any thriller or horror movies you have seen. When dramatic music starts to play, you know that someone is in danger, but the character in the movie does not. This is an example of dramatic irony.



Can you identify the dramatic irony in the excerpt from *Tom Sawyer*?



Excerpt

Questions

Authors often use dramatic irony to add humor or suspense to their writing.

Can you identify the dramatic irony in the following passage?

Press **start** to begin.

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