Types of Point of View

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**point of view:** method of narrating a short story, novel, narrative poem, or narrative nonfiction work

**narrator:** the character or voice who tells the events in a work of literature

**first-person point of view:** the narrator is a character in a work of literature

**second-person point of view:** the narrator speaks directly to the reader or main character

**third-person point of view:** the narrator is not a character in the story

HERE’S HOW

**Step 1: Identify who and what.** Ask, “Who is telling the story and what does that person know?”

- **First person:** A first-person narrator tells a story in which he or she actively participates. A first-person narrator describes what’s going on inside his or her mind and may also describe other characters through observations.

- **Second person:** This narrator is outside of the story, speaking directly to the main character. Second-person point of view is sometimes used in poetry. It is difficult for a writer to work with, so it is rarely used.

- **Third-person point of view:** This person tells the story but does not participate in the events of the story. However, he or she usually knows the thoughts and feelings of one character, who is not himself or herself. A third-person narrator may also know what is going on inside the minds of all the characters.

**Step 2: Look at the pronouns.** The pronouns in the narrative part of the story, not in the dialogue, help identify the point of view from which the story is told.

- **First-person point of view:** The narrator uses first-person pronouns such as *I, me, my, we, us,* and *our.*

- **Second-person point of view:** The narrator uses second-person pronouns such as *you* and *yours.*

- **Third-person point of view:** The narrator uses third-person pronouns such as *he, she,* and *they.*
MODEL POINTS OF VIEW

First-person:  I threw the ball and watched as Howard caught it.
Second-person:  You threw the ball and watched as Howard caught it.
Third-person:  Charlie threw the ball; he watched as Howard caught it.