



# An introduction to narrative/authorial voice

Point of view, first person, third person: whichever you use, a story can't be written without using point of view. The better we know the ways in which it can be used, the better use we can make of it in our own writing.



## Narrative voice

The two main points of view are:

- Third person narration (identified by pronouns such as he, she, they) - the narrator stands outside the story itself;
- First person narration (identified by the pronoun I) - the narrator participates in the story.

This is where things become complicated, because the first and third person can be used in a variety of ways!



## Third person

The third person narrator, because they are outside the story, can be "omniscient" (all-seeing and all-hearing). This means that they can:

- intrude - pass comment, evaluate, judge;
- be neutral - describe without commenting, or evaluating or judging.

The story is told as if it is coming directly from the minds of the character(s), but the narrative voice has access to some of these minds and can therefore manipulate the reader to respond in a certain way.

## First person

The first person narrator is usually a character within the story and is therefore limited in their understanding of the story - they will only see things from their point of view. They can be:

- an observer who happens to see (witness) the events in the story or plays a minor role in the action;
- the main character.

## Authorial voice

- The characters are not the only ones that have a voice in the story. The impression that the reader has of the author, the "teller" of the tale, also influences their experience of the story. For this reason, a distinction is sometimes made between the narrative voice and the authorial voice. The authorial voice is a controlling presence regarded by the reader to be a "guiding personality" behind the story and therefore behind the characters. It can be seen in the author's method of expression and use of language (e.g. direct address, use of brackets).

