

Who Are You?

Point of view refers to the relationship between the narrator and the other characters in the story. It identifies the storyteller. Usually stories are told from one of two points of view: first person and third person. Below is a chart displaying the characteristics of each along with their advantages and disadvantages.

First Person Characteristics

1. Is one of the characters in the story
2. Uses pronouns like I, me, my, we, our, us, etc.
3. Can only see and hear what happens in narrator's presence
4. Can reveal only narrator's thoughts, feelings, ideas

Advantages

1. Story begins quickly.
2. Reader becomes directly involved with character.

Disadvantages

1. Views are very biased.
2. Narrator's movements are limited to one place at a time.

Third Person Characteristics

1. Is not in story; looks down from above
2. Uses pronouns like he, she, it, they, him, her, etc.
3. Can see everyone and everything
4. Can share thoughts and feelings of all characters

Advantages

1. Narrator can shift scenes, call attention to specific details.
2. Narrator can draw conclusions for reader.

Disadvantages

1. Story begins slowly.
2. Reader is not attached or concerned with narrator.
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On another paper, rewrite a nursery rhyme or a scene from a fairy tale from the point of view of two different characters. Use one of the ideas below or one of your own.

Rewrite Hickory, Dickory Dock from the mouse's and clock's point of view.

Rewrite a scene from "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" from Grumpy's and Sneezzy's point of view.

Rewrite Hey, Diddle Diddle from the dog's and cow's point of view.

Playing with Point of View

How do you know which point of view to use? Each type has a different effect. Read the following piece:

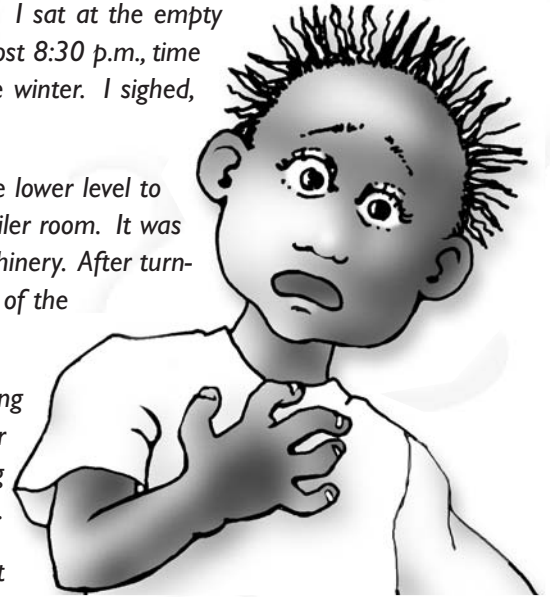
A Night at the Pool

It was Tuesday and my co-worker, Tim, had not yet exacted his revenge. I sat at the empty swim club, nervously wondering if tonight would be the night. It was almost 8:30 p.m., time to go down to close the indoor pool that very few members used in the winter. I sighed, knowing that Tim could get into any of the club entrances with his key.

At 8:40, I finished covering the pool. Now it was time to go down to the lower level to turn off the indoor pool light switch in the boiler room. I despised the boiler room. It was a dark, dank room full of mysterious hisses and moans made by the machinery. After turning off the light, I would run back upstairs, away from the unseen terrors of the lower level. Now it was time to enter it once again.

I reached for the doorknob, hesitantly. I pushed open the door with shaking hands. Silence. I took a step, the darkness enveloping me. I reached for the light switch when, "BOOOOOOO!" Something grabbed me, laughing maliciously. "Ahhhhhhhhhh!" I screamed hysterically and burst into tears.

The light switched on and there was Tim, laughing heartily. "Ha, ha, I got you!" he said with a satisfied gleam in his eye.



1. What point of view is this story told from? _____

Is it a good choice for this particular story? Why or why not? _____

2. Insert some inner monologues. Write them on another sheet or in your notebook. How do they change the story?

3. Now rewrite the story with a different point of view. Insert some inner monologues. How does the story change? Is anything lost in the change?