

Point Of View Notes

1. **First person (“I” and “me”).** First-person speakers are involved to at least some degree in the actions of the work. Such narrators may have (1) complete understanding, (2) partial or incorrect understanding, or (3) no understanding at all.
 - a. *Major participant*
 - I. Tells his or her own story and thoughts as a major mover.
 - II. Tells a story about others and also about herself or himself as one of the major movers.
 - III. Tells a story mainly about others
 - b. *Minor participant* tells a story about events experienced and witnessed.
 - c. *Nonparticipating but identifiable speaker* who learns about events in other ways (e.g., listening to participants, examining documents, hearing news reports). The narrator tells the story as a report, or as a combination report and Reconstruction.

2. **Second Person (“you”).** Occurs (a) when the speaker (e.g., parent, psychologist) knows more about a character’s actions than the character himself or herself.; or (b) when the speaker (e.g., lawyer, spouse, friend, sports umpire) is explaining to another person (the “you”) that person’s disputable actions and statements. The speaker may also use “you” to mean (c) himself or herself or (d) anyone at all. Do not use this point of view in formal writing!

3. **Third person (“she,” “he,” “it,” “they”).** The speaker is outside the action and is mainly a reporter of actions and speeches. Some speakers may have unique and distinguishing traits even though no separate identity is claimed for them (“the unnamed third-person narrator”). Other third person speakers who are not separately identifiable may represent the words and views of the authors themselves (“the authorial voice”).
 - a. *Dramatic or third-person objective.* The narrator reports only what can be seen and heard. The thoughts of characters are included only if they are spoken or written (dialogue, reported or overheard conversation, letters, reports, etc.).
 - b. *Omniscient.* The omniscient speaker sees all, reports all, knows all, and explains the inner workings of the minds of all characters (when necessary).
 - c. *Limited, or limited omniscient.* The focus is on the actions, responses, thoughts, and feelings of a single major character. The narration may involve primarily what the character does, and it may also probe deeply within the consciousness of the character.