

Narrative Point of View



- 1. First-person**
- 2. Third-person omniscient**
- 3. Third-person limited**
- 4. Objective**

First Person

- **The narrator participates in the story as a major or minor character in the action of the story.**
- **The reader must question the *reliability* of the narrator because the narrator may not be recounting the objective truth.**
- **Question the narrator's trustworthiness.**

Third-Person Limited

- **Third-person narrator whose knowledge is limited to one character**
- **Character can be major or minor**

Third-person Omniscient

- *Omniscient* = all-knowing
- The third-person knows everything about the thoughts and feelings of any character in the story at any time

Third-person Objective

- **A third-person narrator tells the story without sharing the thoughts or feelings of any character**
- **Readers are like spectators of a movie or play- they can see what the characters do and hear what they say, but they must infer what the characters think and feel)**

Point of View



Stems to Identify POV:

1. Who tells the story?
2. How much does the narrator know?
3. How far does the narrator look inside the characters and report their thoughts and feelings?
4. Does the narrator strike you as reliable?
5. What effect is gained by the narrator? How does the POV shape the theme?

Example A: Omniscient Point of View

Weary in every limb, the ant tugged over the snow a piece of corn he had stored up last summer. It would taste mighty good at dinner tonight.

A grasshopper, cold and hungry, looked on. Finally, he could bear it no longer. "Please, friend ant, may I have a bite of corn?"

"What were you doing all last summer?" asked the ant. He looked the grasshopper up and down. He knew its kind.

"I sang from dawn till dark," replied the grasshopper, happily unaware of what was coming next.

"Well," said the ant, hardly bothering to conceal his contempt, "since you sang all summer, you can dance all winter."

**HE WHO IDLES WHEN HE'S YOUNG
WILL HAVE NOTHING WHEN HE'S OLD**

Example A: Omniscient Point of View

Weary in every limb, the ant tugged over the snow a piece of corn he had stored up last summer. **It would taste mighty good at dinner tonight.**

A grasshopper, **cold and hungry**, looked on. **Finally, he could bear it no longer.** “Please, friend ant, may I have a bite of corn?”

“What were you doing all last summer?” asked the ant. He looked the grasshopper up and down. **He knew its kind.**

“I sang from dawn till dark,” replied the grasshopper, **happily unaware of what was coming next.**

“Well,” said the ant, **hardly bothering to conceal his contempt**, “since you sang all summer, you can dance all winter.”

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Example B: Third-person limited

Weary in every limb, the ant tugged over the snow a piece of corn he had stored up last summer. It would taste mighty good at dinner tonight. It was then that he noticed the grasshopper, looking cold and pinched.

“Please, friend ant, may I have a bite of corn?” asked the grasshopper.

He looked the grasshopper up and down. “What were you doing all last summer?” asked the ant. He knew its kind.

“I sang from dawn till dark,” replied the grasshopper.

“Well,” said the ant, hardly bothering to conceal his contempt, “since you sang all summer, you can dance all winter.”

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He looked the grasshopper up and down. **“What were you doing all last summer?”** asked the ant. **He knew its kind.**

“I sang from dawn till dark,” replied the grasshopper.

“Well,” said the ant, **hardly bothering to conceal his contempt,** **“since you sang all summer, you can dance all winter.”**

Example C: First-person point of view

Cold and hungry, I watched the ant tugging over the snow a piece of corn he had stored up last summer. My feelers twitched, and I was conscious of a tic in my left hind leg. Finally, I could bear it no longer.

“Please, friend ant,” I asked, “may I have a bite of your corn?”

He looked me up and down. “What were you doing all last summer?” he asked, rather to smugly it seemed to me.

“I sang from dawn till dark,” I said innocently, remembering the happy times.

“Well,” he said, with a priggish sneer, “since you sang all summer, you can dance all winter.”

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Example D: Third-person objective

The ant tugged over the snow a piece of corn he had stored up last summer, perspiring in spite of the cold.

A grasshopper, his feelers twitching and with a tic in his left hind leg, looked on for some time. Finally, he asked, "Please, friend ant, may I have a bite of your corn?"

The ant looked the grasshopper up and down. "What were you doing all last summer?" he snapped.

"I sang from dawn till dark," replied the grasshopper, not changing his tone.

"Well," said the ant, and a faint smile crept into his face, "since you sang all summer, you can dance all winter."

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