

Point of View: Where We Stand as We Tell the Story

Grammatical Third Person: She, It, He, They

Grammatical Second Person: You

Grammatical First Person: I, We

Omniscient	Chronicle	3 rd person limited (or “free indirect style” or “the reflector”)	Second person	First Person	Stream of Consciousness
<p>All knowing; freedom to visit every thought and deed of every character. Can describe anyone, switch around at will.</p> <p>Much 19th c. fiction. Many genre novels and best sellers of late 20th c. and today. James Michele.</p> <p>Old fashioned stories, fables, parables, and fairy tales.</p> <p>The Bible.</p>	<p>All exterior, few thoughts. Just the facts.</p> <p>Usually stays outside the characters and looks at them.</p> <p>Some Hemingway. “Hills Like White Elephants.”</p> <p>Reporting.</p>	<p>One of most common of the 20th century and today. Everything that is seen and thought by one character. It only goes inside that one person’s head, but the character can also be described. Uses the grammatical 3rd person.</p> <p>“He walked down the street. <i>It's so hot today</i>, he thought. He lifted his hand to wipe sweat off his balding forehead.”</p> <p>Multiple or alternating 3rd persons</p>	<p>Generally a <i>tour de force</i>— Jay McInerney's novel <i>Bright Lights, Big City</i>. Most often a quirky first person, but might be addressed to another.</p> <p>Also used for author to address a story to a particular character. Example: Randall Kenan, “This Far; Or, A Body in Motion,” addressed to Booker T. Washington (in <i>Let the Dead Bury Their Dead</i>).</p> <p>A children’s “Write Yr Own Adventure”</p> <p>Italo Calvino</p>	<p>Also very common in 20th c & today. Usually one person's story, in the grammatical first person. Could be in the form of “life review,” fictional autobiography, journal, letters, email messages, alternating 1st persons, or monologue.</p> <p>Uncommon is communal “We,” like <i>Autumn of the Patriarch</i>, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.</p> <p>Narrator may be protagonist, or might be peripheral as in <i>Gatsby</i>, or unreliable as in famous Eudora Welty short story “Why I Live at the P.O.”</p>	<p>Very intimate first person that tells sensations and impressions, usually as they are happening.</p> <p>Often used in the middle of other forms for moments of great stress.</p> <p>Lots in James Joyce and other Modernists.</p> <p>Virginia Woolf’s <i>The Waves</i>.</p>