

Literary Terms #7 – Point-of-view

- I. Point-of-view -- who is telling the story. It can be told by an outside observer, a single character or by many characters within the story.

A. Types of POV

1. First Person – The narrator is a character in the story. The narrator uses first person pronouns such as *I*, *me*, and *we*. In the first person POV, the reader should be aware of the following:

- a. Unreliable Narrator – The narrator is not trustworthy since he is the center of the action, he wishes the audience to know only his version of the story and not necessarily the facts.

- b. Unintentional Unreliable Narrator – The narrator may be a child or an outsider who believes they are telling the complete truth but who, the reader quickly learns, **are not fully aware** of the circumstances around them.

2. Second Person - The narrator “tells” you the story with “you” as the pronoun. Usually used when offering instructions.

Example: *First you should always wash your hands.*”

3. Third Person - The narrator uses third person pronouns such as *he*, *she*, and *they*.

- a. Limited – The narrator tells “his” or “her” story and reveals **one** character’s thoughts or feelings.

Ex: *Sad that his girlfriend had left him, Ben wasn’t paying attention as he walked down the street. A man drove by and yelled, “Hey, watch where you’re going!”*

- b. Third Person Omniscient (all knowing) – The narrator does not participate in the story but tells “his” or “her” story and reveals more than one character’s thoughts or feelings.

Ex: *Sad that his girlfriend had left him, Ben wasn’t paying attention as he walked down the street. Tom was also having a bad day, and as he was driving by Ben, Tom tried to startle*

him: “Hey, watch where you’re going!” Tom yelled intimidatingly.

- c. Third Person Objective – The narrator tells “his” or “her” story and does not reveal any character’s thoughts or feelings. Characters may reveal their feelings through actions or dialogue.

Ex: He walked down the street. A man drove by and yelled, “Hey, watch where you’re going!”