

Point of View/Mood

→ Different Point of Views

Basics

Advantages and Disadvantages

Well Known Works

Breaking POV Rules

→ Establishing Mood

→ Exercises

What is a POV?

→ Establishes the story's perspective (narrator voice) for the reader

First Person --- I have to do everything, unless we do it together.

Second Person --- You do everything. You, you, you.

Third Person --- He/She/It does everything except when they do it.

Limited --- Knowledge limited to one character's perception.

Omniscient --- There are no limits to knowledge or thoughts.

Objective --- Dialogue and actions only. No thoughts.

Unreliable Narrator --- The narrator can't be trusted.

First Person POV Pros/Cons

→Pros

- We live in a world unto ourselves.
- Only one person's opinion counts, and that's mine.
- My internal voice is distinctive and loud.
- The reader sees the story behind my eyes.
- My style is the most intimate style of all.
- The narrator may not be reliable because of my perspective.
- My story will seem more personable to the reader.

→Cons

- If I can't see it, it isn't happening.
- I must be there.
- I don't know for sure what other characters think.
- My writing style is subjective.

→Well Known Works

Gulliver's Travels / The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn /
The Catcher in the Rye / White Oleander / Rebecca
The Time Traveler's Wife / Dom Casmuro / To Kill a Mocking Bird /
Lolita / Coral Island / Hunger Games / Divergent / Twilight

Second Person POV Pros/Cons

→ Pros

You get to boldly assert something to the reader.

You're pointing fingers directly at the reader, and you can't dodge it.

If you're making a statement, it can be very direct.

→ Cons

Unless it's short, you may find it difficult to write a whole story this way.

You'll find that literature rarely uses this voice.

You may come across as quirky when overused.

→ Well Known Works

Bright Lights, Big City / If on a Winter's Night a Traveler / You /

All the Truth that's in Me / The Diver's Clothes Lie Empty /

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia / So You Want to be a Rock Star /

Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas / Booked / You Don't Know Me

Third Person Objective POV Pros/Cons

→ Pros

All dialogue and action from any scene are possible.
Freedom to meander from one scene to the next.
Plays and movies are usually told in this POV style.
Objective newspapers/headlines are usually told in this voice.
Absolutely the most objective style, there is no bias.

→ Cons

Inner thoughts are never revealed.
The reader may find it difficult to connect to characters.
Least intimate writing style.
Just give me the facts, ma'am.
You can't set a mood without breaking the POV.

→ Well Known Works

All Plays, Movies, Headlines / Hills Like White Elephants /

Third Person Limited Pros/Cons

→ Pros

Thoughts and emotions of one character are revealed.
The writer may keep a distance and show some scenes objectively.
This is a good style with a limited number of characters.

→ Cons

You can't jump into any other head.
Scene limitations may also exist like in first person.

→ Well Known Works

Harry Potter Series / The Giver / Orphan Train / Cloud Atlas / Lucy /
Thanks for the Memories / The Quest / Life after Life / Moderland /
The Gathering Dark / Still Alice / The Madness Underneath /
Poison / Prophecy / Salvation / Ten ...

Third Person Omniscient Pros/Cons

→ Pros

The reader knows everything.

Contrasting viewpoints take shape.

The story may be broken up into different perspectives.

All scenes are viewable. There are no limits.

This is a great style when many characters exist.

→ Cons

Too many voices may distract the reader.

Rapid POV changes can be jolting.

When in a character's head, the author should not preach, *it's not your place*.

This style has lost favor recently but was very popular in the past.

→ Well Known Works

The Book Thief / Lord of the Rings / The Martian / A Time to Kill /

Under the Dome / The Fifth Wave / The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo /

Angels and Demons / Dreamcatcher / War and Peace / A Tale of Two Cities

Unreliable Narrator

→ Pros

The reader can be fooled into believing something false.
This technique allows writers to hide details and information in open view.
Often sees the world in one or more character's perspective(s).
Truth is in the eye of the beholder.

→ Cons

The reader may get agitated.
If the narrator can't be trusted, who can?

→ Well Known Works

Fight Club / Clockwork Orange / Gone Girl / Lolita / The Great Gatsby /
American Psycho / The Catcher in the Rye / House of Leaves /
Screwtape Letters / We Need to talk about Kevin /
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Breaking POV Rules

→ General rules of thumb:

“The bulk of the book should be written in one POV”

“Each scene should be written from one POV”

“Clear breaks with POV shifts are considered okay”

→ Absolute No-Nos

Shifting perspective in a middle of a paragraph.

Shifting POV so many times that the reader feels like a ping-pong ball.

If I can't see it, it ain't happening. (First Person violation.)

Poor characterization can lead to poor POV issues.

→ Be aware: Best selling authors are breaking this rule all of the time!

Ultimately what counts is the reader's opinion, not the critics.

Are the POV changes distracting or enhancing the story?

Omniscient 3rd Person seems to be more out of favor today.

Even today there are books with head jumping.

Omniscient 3rd Person **DOES ALLOW** head hopping.

Critics be damned!

Setting Mood

- The mood is a way of making readers feel an atmosphere. If you're having trouble bringing readers into your stories, study how to enhance mood.
- The mood is the vibe that readers get from reading your story.
- Tone is the attitude that an author takes toward the audience, subject, character, while mood is the emotion that the reader gets from reading a piece.
- Mood conveys feelings: happy/sad/scared/horror/dangerous/etc.
- Classic exercise from John Gardner: Describe a barn as seen through the eyes of a father whose son has been killed in a war without mentioning the son, war, or death.

Exercises

→ As part of a ritual, our main character must dip a hand into a vase that may contain nothing, a poisonous snake, or a poisonous spider. The main character doesn't know what is inside the vase, but he has been told, along with the other right of passage candidates, that if they dip their right hand and remain emotionally calm without showing any fear for five minutes, nothing will happen. Write a paragraph in the POV that would cover this scene best along with an appropriate mood of conflicting tension and calmness.

→ A surgeon has informed a husband that his wife has survived a harsh car accident after a difficult operation, while her unborn baby has perished. The husband has been put into a difficult situation because the surgeon has forewarned him that his wife is very weak and should not be told about the child's loss under any circumstance until her physical condition improves. Her state of mental health is critical to the moment. The husband is sitting/resting by her hospital bed when she stirs. Write a paragraph from the POV that covers this scene best along with setting an appropriate mood.