

# First Person vs. Third Person

Podcast Length: 13:40  
Character Value: Reliability  
Health Message: Bullying

## Synopsis

Today's Walking Classroom podcast talks about point of view in writing. First person is the "I" point of view where the narrator is a character in the story, often the main character. Third person is the "he" or "she" point of view where the narrator is not in the story, but rather watching the story unfold like a movie and describing it to others. When a story is told from first person, you see the story only through that character's eyes. When a story is told in third person, the narrator can choose to share with the reader what many of the characters are thinking and feeling.

## Objectives

- Identify the difference between first and third person point of view.
- Compare and contrast the benefits of each perspective.
- Analyze the effective uses of first and third person.

## Procedure

If you want to compare student comprehension before and after listening, administer the Comprehension Quiz before doing anything related to the podcast. Retest after walking.

- Review key vocabulary (included definitions are limited to the context of today's podcast).
  - protagonist (noun):** the hero or heroine of a story  
*Junie B. Jones is the protagonist in Barbara Park's popular books.*
  - perspective (noun):** point of view  
*A memoir is typically told from the first person perspective.*
  - heroine (noun):** the main female character in a story  
*Katniss Everdeen is the heroine of The Hunger Games.*
- Build background by asking students, "How many of you have ever tried to guess what someone else is thinking? What would be the benefits of being able to get inside someone else's head?"
- Allow time for discussion.
- Podcast preview: "Today we're going to learn more about the complexities of writing, namely different perspectives or point of view. We will learn how to choose between them and how to use them effectively. Ready? Let's go!"
- Walk!

## Questions for Thought and Discussion

Upon return to the classroom, discuss the main ideas and content from the podcast using the questions and suggested answers below.

### 1. What were some of the big ideas of this podcast?

- ✓ First person is the "I" point of view. The narrator is a character in the story, most often the main character.
- ✓ Third person is the "he" or "she" point of view. The narrator is watching the story unfold like a movie.
- ✓ When a story is told from first person, you see the story only through that character's eyes. With third person, the reader has knowledge of what all of the characters are thinking and feeling.
- ✓ Third person is the most commonly used point of view. It offers the writer the most flexibility because the narrator is close enough to the story to tell it with detail, but s/he also sees everything happening around the main character.

### 2. When would be a good time to use the third person point of view?

- ✓ Allow children to discuss anytime when they witnessed an event, but wasn't part of the event. For example: When writing a newspaper article about a school's basketball team.

### 3. First person narrators are not always reliable because they tell things as they see them, which is sometimes different than what has actually occurred.

#### a. In what types of situations is reliability important?

- ✓ Suggestion: When reporting facts, when teaching someone something new etc.

#### b. How does being reliable affect the way that others see you?

- ✓ Suggestion: When you are reliable, people trust what you say and don't question it.

# First Person vs. Third Person Comprehension Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Point of view describes
  - a. the main plot of a story.
  - b. the setting of a story.
  - c. who is telling a story.
  
2. First person is
  - a. the "I" perspective.
  - b. the "he" or "she" perspective.
  - c. the "you" perspective.
  
3. In a story told from the third person
  - a. the narrator is not part of the action, but is able to describe the action.
  - b. the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the story.
  - c. both a and b.
  
4. Protagonist means
  - a. the hero of the story.
  - b. the author of a story.
  - c. the person narrating a story.
  
5. What would be the best adjective to describe the first person point of view?
  - a. personal
  - b. detached
  - c. all-knowing
  
6. Which of the following types of writing typically uses the third person point of view?
  - a. personal memoirs
  - b. diaries
  - c. historical accounts
  
7. Which statement is an example of the first person point of view?
  - a. Thomas Jefferson was a founding father and the author of the Declaration of Independence.
  - b. As I heard the words come out of his mouth, my head felt like it was about to explode!
  - c. Mary could tell that Nancy was hiding something; she just wasn't sure what it was.
  
8. When would be a good time to use the third person point of view?
  - a. When you want to highlight one character's experiences and emotions.
  - b. When you're writing a newspaper article about your school's basketball team.
  - c. When you want to write a letter to your grandmother about the math prize you just won.
  
9. Talking to an adult about bullying when it occurs is one way to help prevent it.
  - a. true
  - b. false
  
10. There has to be physical contact, like spitting, punching or kicking, to be considered bullying.
  - a. true
  - b. false