

Point of View: Who is Telling the Story?

In literature the point of view is the story from one person's perspective. A trick is to ask, "Who is talking?" In other words, who is the **narrator**? The narrator is the person who is telling the story. There are two main types of narrators: first person and third person.

If the author is using first person narration, the narrator is a main character and uses *I* or *me* when speaking.

In third person narration the narrator uses *he, she, it* or *they*. The words *I* and *me* are used only in dialogue.

Below are passages from books. Read them and write what type of narration is being used: first person or third person. Then briefly explain your reasons.

Explanations will vary, examples given.

1) Tom chased the traitor home, and thus found out where he lived. He then held a position at the gate for some time, daring the enemy to come outside, but the enemy only made faces at him through the window and declined.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain

Third person
because the
narrator uses "he,"
and "him."

2) While I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the daytime I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her.

Black Beauty, Anna Sewell

First person
because the
narrator uses
"I" when speaking

3) She often questioned me about England and listened attentively to my answers, but I was certain that nothing I said made much difference.

Wide Sargasso Sea, Jean Rhys

Third person

4) I used to dress up in my mum's long skirts and tie my head with her head-ties. It was when I was tying my head one day in my room that I got my chance to ask her about calling me Harriet.

Harriet's Daughter, Marlene Nourbese Philip

First person

5) When I was born my mother hadn't seen her family in three years but she wanted me to know them and wanted them to know me, so the prodigal daughter returned. We lived in a town but I would spend weeks at a time with my grandmother in Soweto, often during the holidays.

Born A Crime, Trevor Noah

First person

