

#### 4.4 Point of View

*Hip and Hop are climbing a mountain. Hop is exhausted.*



Hop: Hop is tired. Hop wants to go to sleep now.

Hip: *(Looking down at Hop)*. What are you doing?

Hop: Hop is using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

Hip: Why?

Hop: Hip wants to forget about this bad situation.

Hip: Well, if you're going to use 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view, you should probably understand 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view.

Hop: Point of view?

Hip: Point of view is basically the perspective of who's telling the story.

Hop: You mean the narrator?

Hip: Exactly. If we have a 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view, our narrator is the main character in the story, and we know its 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view because we read pronouns like "I" and "me." When an author chooses to use 1<sup>st</sup> person, the reader is able to get inside the main character's head and know what he or she is thinking.

Hop: Yeah. I know what kind of books you're talking about. I like those kinds of stories because it feels like I'm in the story. It's almost like when I read "I" and "me," I think the story is really happening to me.

Hip: Sometimes that's why an author chooses to write using a 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view.

Hop: Now that I know there is a 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view and a 3<sup>rd</sup> person, is there a 2<sup>nd</sup> person point of view?

Hip: There is, but it isn't used very much.

Hop: Why?

Hip: Because the 2<sup>nd</sup> person point of view uses the "you" pronoun. It's like the narrator is talking to the reader.

Hop: Weird.

Hip: It's kind of like when you're watching a movie, and a character in the movie looks into the camera and talks to you.

Hop: Okay, so 2<sup>nd</sup> person point of view is when the narrator is talking directly towards the reader, but it isn't used much

Hip: It's kind of a weird feeling when you see 2<sup>nd</sup> person.

Hip: *(turns to face and talks to audience)* It would feel strange if I just started talking to you all wouldn't it?

Hip: *(faces Hop again)* I usually like writing in 3<sup>rd</sup> person because I want a more objective voice; I just want to describe the actions without adding my personal opinion.

Hop: Using 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view can be pretty fun.

- Hip: 3<sup>rd</sup> person means that someone outside of the main character is telling the story. You can tell that an author is using 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view when you see the pronouns “he,” “she,” “they,” “their;” or when the characters are all referred to by name. If someone was reading what you were saying before, they would identify it as 3<sup>rd</sup> person, because they would read, “Hop is tired. Hop wants to go to sleep now.” The narrator is speaking like he or she is outside of the situation.
- Hop: I just thought of something. If the main character isn’t telling the story, who is the narrator in 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view?
- Hip: That depends. There are two types of **3<sup>rd</sup> person narration: 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited** and **3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient**. 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited is usually when a character in the story is the narrator, so we only know what that character knows. Think of it as if there was someone following us around this jungle, writing about everything that we do and say. The narrator would only be able to describe what he or she could observe. A person running around in the jungle couldn’t see into our minds, right?
- Hop: That’s true. So 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited is when the narrator describes what’s happening to the main character, but is limited because the narrator doesn’t know what that character is thinking.
- Hip: It can be a lot of fun to read these types of stories because we have to use the descriptions to figure out how the characters are feeling; there’s a little bit of mystery in these stories because we don’t know everything.
- Hop: But Hip, I’ve read a bunch of stories where the narrator seems to know everything.
- Hip: Those stories are written from 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient point of view. In omniscient, the narrator knows everything: the past, the future, and what characters are thinking. A lot of people call this the god point of view because the narrator seems to know everything about everything.
- Hop: Why do authors use this point of view?
- Hip: Sometimes an author wants to be able to jump inside the heads of all the characters and directly reveal information to the reader that 1<sup>st</sup> person and 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited wouldn’t be able to.
- Hop: Okay. In 1st person narration, the reader only knows what the main character reveals or knows. In 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited narration, the reader only knows what one of the characters in the story witnesses or discovers. However, in 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient, the reader can learn anything about any characters; including what they are thinking.
- Hip: You’ve got it.
- Hop: I’m kind of like the 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient narrator, because I know everything.
- Hip: Do you know that you’re about to step in a hole and fall down the mountain?
- Hop: Wha....

*Hop slips and starts to roll down the mountain.*

*Author – Jonathon Philipp*

## Post-Reading Activity

A. Define the following point of views: 1<sup>ST</sup> Person, 2<sup>ND</sup> Person, 3<sup>RD</sup> Person Limited, or 3<sup>RD</sup> Person OMNISCIENT.

B. Label the following sentences as either 1<sup>ST</sup> Person, 2<sup>ND</sup> Person, 3<sup>RD</sup> Person LIMITED, or 3<sup>RD</sup> Person OMNISCIENT.

1. A smile formed as she delicately removed the book from the shelf.

2. When she removed the book from the shelf, she was very happy because she finally found the book her mother gave her.

3. I removed the book from the shelf as quickly as I could.

4. Could you shut this book, please?