Unit IV: Reading Application: Literary Texts

Lesson 21

Compare and Contrast Different Points of View

8.L.4: Compare and contrast different points of view (e.g., first person and third person limited, omniscient, objective and subjective), and explain how voice affects literary text.

Getting the Idea

Authors tell, or narrate their stories in a variety of ways. The way a story is told is its point of view. The chart below lists and defines various points of view and how they differ.

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<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>First Person</td>
<td>The story is told from the viewpoint of a single character. The character can reveal his or her experience, thoughts, and feelings, but that is all. The narrator of the story usually uses the words I, we, or us.</td>
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<td>Third Person (Limited)</td>
<td>The third person limited point of view is similar to first person. The story is told from the point of view of a single character. The author does not share any information other than that known by this character. However, the narrator of the story refers to the character as he or she.</td>
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<td>Third Person (Objective)</td>
<td>The third person objective point of view is told from the point of view of a narrator who knows about more than one character. The author can share much more information about the background, outside events, or related characters than in the limited point of view. However, the author is still limited to sharing information that is closely related to the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Omniscient</td>
<td>The omniscient point of view is told from the viewpoint of someone who knows everything about the characters, plot, and any and all information that could be related to the story. By using this point of view an author can share the inner feelings of the characters as well as any events, details about the setting as he or she were all-seeing.</td>
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The way in which an author tells a story using different points of view contributes to the story’s voice. You can think of the story’s voice as the tone and feeling that the author communicates in the writing. The voice can vary greatly. It can be very emotional if the story is told through a particular character. Or it could be very dry and analytical if told from a third person point of view. Clearly, the voice strongly influences the feeling of the story. This is true for poems as well.
1. What is the point of view of the story, except in paragraph 3?
   A. first person
   B. third person limited
   C. third person objective
   D. first person subjective

2. Which of the following tells how the point of view of the story changed in paragraph 3?
   A. The story switched to Johanna's first person point of view.
   B. It switched to the pilot's first person point of view.
   C. It switched to another passenger's limited third person point of view.
   D. It switched to an omniscient point of view.

Answer in complete sentences.

How might the voice of the story be different if it had been told completely from Johanna's point of view?
Guided Reading

Read the following story. How do the narrative elements connect to its meaning?

Learning to Fly

As Johanna walked out of the airport building, she looked across the landing field to where the plane was parked. She couldn’t believe that the airplane she saw was actually going to take her into the air for 30 minutes. They were going to fly from Boston to the island of Martha’s Vineyard in Massachusetts.

Johanna looked around and counted only eight other people who were standing with her waiting for the plane. The plane had two propeller engines, five small windows running down each side, and a tiny space for baggage in the nose. The more she thought about the idea, the less she liked it, and she was beginning to wonder if she could get onto the plane. She could feel her heart begin to beat faster and noticed that she felt sweaty and chilly and her stomach was tight. Terrible thoughts raced through her mind, like speeding, small animals running wildly out of control.

* * * * *

I had just finished my final flight check when I noticed a pale woman standing looking at the plane as if it were some sort of hideous monster. I thought she might turn and run, so I decided to go up and see if I could calm her down. I introduced myself and told her that this was about the safest plane in the air and pointed out the beautiful, calm day, which meant no turbulence or bumps. She seemed slightly better, but then I decided to give her the full treatment.

* * * * *
Johanna felt better after the pilot spoke to her, but was not quite convinced, so the pilot invited her to look inside the plane. She showed Johanna the single seat next to the pilot and the four pairs of seats behind. She told her that the view was wonderful because they only flew at 3,000 feet, and that she had been flying this route for nearly 10 years.

That finally convinced Johanna to take a chance. The next thing she knew, she was sitting in her seat with her seatbelt wrapped tightly around her waist and the noise of the props in her ears.

Once they were in the air, Johanna's face was glued to the window. The view was spectacular. Looking outside helped take her mind off of her fears. By the time they were landing in Martha's Vineyard, she was sorry the trip was already over.

Ask yourself: How would I characterize the voice of the story?