

Standards Focus: Narrator and Point of View

Chapter One

The **narrator** is the person who relates the events of a story to a reader or audience. **Point of view** is the perspective from which a story is told. The point of view from which a story is told determines how the reader interprets the story and understands the characters. There are three main types of point of view:

- **First Person:** narrator is a character in the story; uses the first person “I” to tell the story
- **Third Person Limited:** narrator does not participate in the action of the story; relates the thoughts and feelings of only one character
- **Third Person Omniscient:** narrator does not participate in the action of the story; relates the thoughts and feelings of all the characters

The Great Gatsby is told from the first person point of view. The story is told by narrator Nick Carraway, and he uses the first person pronouns “I,” “me,” and “my,” to relate the events.

Directions: For each of the following excerpts from the novel, you will be converting the first person into third person, either limited or omniscient. However, it is important that before you convert to third person, you clearly understand the first person narration. For each excerpt, give a one to two sentence summary of Nick’s point of view, then retell the excerpt in third person.

Ex. “In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since. ‘Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone,’ he told me, ‘just remember that all the people in this world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had.’”

Summary: Nick cannot forget the advice his father gave him: to appreciate that he may have had more than others, and to think about that fact before judging someone.

Third Person Retelling: In Nick’s younger years, his father had a great influence in shaping Nick into the man he is today. His father’s wisdom made Nick appreciate that not everyone had the advantages that he had growing up.

1. “Why they came east I don’t know. They had spent a year in France, for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn’t believe it--I had no sight into Daisy’s heart but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking a little wistfully for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game.”

Summary: _____

Third Person Retelling: _____

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2. “She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I’ve heard it said that Daisy’s murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)”

Summary: _____

Third Person Retelling:

3. “[Daisy’s] eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom’s, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. ‘Sophisticated -- God I’m so sophisticated!’ The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.”

Summary: _____

Third Person Retelling:

4. “Their interest rather touched me and made them less remotely rich--nevertheless, I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away. It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms--but apparently there were no such intentions in her head. As for Tom the fact that he ‘had some woman in New York’ was really less surprising than that he had been depressed by a book. Something was making him nibble at the edge of stale ideas as if his sturdy physical egotism no longer nourished his peremptory heart.”

Summary: _____

Third Person Retelling:
