

Types of Narrators: Point of View in Fiction Writing

The “*once-upon-a-time*” stories of your childhood already taught you that in order to tell a story, you need a narrator who transmits it to the reader. Every text (even articles or reports) has a narrator. That is, they’re told from a specific point of view with a particular approach and a distinct tone.

Thanks to the narrator, you can describe characters and settings, convey emotions, insert dialogues, express opinions, and ration information to create suspense or intrigue.

How does the narrator ration information?

1. Information can be rationed by choosing what is said and what is not said because it’s not necessary or because it’s left to the reader’s imagination.
2. Narrators can ration information by selecting when and how the information is displayed. Doing so little by little builds suspense.
3. Ration information by anticipating events as seen in this example: “Peter heard the doorbell ring and went to answer it. He couldn’t imagine then that the person behind the door was going to change his life.”

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF NARRATORS

1. **Third-person view, omniscient narrator** – This is the all-knowing, all-seeing narrator type.
2. **Third-person view, subjective narrator** – This narrator type conveys the thoughts, feelings, or opinions of one or more characters.
3. **Third-person view, objective narrator** – This type of narrator gives an unbiased point of view in order to achieve neutrality. It’s typical of journalistic texts.
4. **First-person view (witness character)** – The narrator is a character who isn’t necessarily involved in the story but provides his or her point of view.
5. **First-person view (protagonist)** – The main character is also the narrator and tells the story from his or her point of view.
6. **Second-person view** – This narrator refers to the reader as “you” as if he or she was a character within the story. It’s the rarest mode of narration in literature.

How do you choose the right narrator for your story?

To be honest, there’s not a single or right answer to this question. The most important thing is to know what you want to tell, how you want to tell it, and the feelings you want to transmit to your readers.

AUTODIEGETIC NARRATOR

Narrators are often a character in the story they are telling.

These types of narrators are called homodiegetic narrators. (*Diegetic means within a setting or story world.*)

If the homodiegetic narrator is also the protagonist of the story, he or she is called an autodiegetic narrator.

What is the difference between Homodiegetic and Autodiegetic narrator?

A first-person narrative may be either autodiegetic, in which the narrator is also the protagonist of the story, or homodiegetic, in which the narrator is a minor character and therefore simply a witness to the experiences of the protagonist.

What is the difference between Heterodiegetic and Extradiegetic?

An extradiegetic narrator is a narrator whose existence level is outside of the fictional universe occupied by the characters whose story he is telling.

An heterodiegetic narrator is a narrator who is telling the story from outside of it, not as an actor or participant in the story.

NARRATORS

Type	Pronouns Used	Special Characteristics
First Person	I and we	The narrator is part of the story.
Second Person	you	The narrator speaks directly to the reader.
Third Person	he, she, it, or they	The narrator tells the story of others but is not included.