

Examples

– Direct speech:

He laid down his bundle and thought of his misfortune. "And just what pleasure have I found, since I came into this world?" he asked.

– Indirect speech:

He laid down his bundle and thought of his misfortune. He asked himself what pleasure he had found since he came into the world.

– Free indirect speech:

He laid down his bundle and thought of his misfortune. And just what pleasure had he found, since he came into this world?

Stream-of-consciousness techniques

Free indirect speech is a style of third person narration which combines some of the characteristics of third-person report with first-person direct speech. (It is also referred to as **free indirect discourse**, **free indirect style**)

Stream-of-consciousness techniques

Comparison of styles

What distinguishes **free indirect speech** from **normal indirect speech**, is **the lack of an introductory expression such as "He said" or "he thought"**. It is as if the subordinate clause carrying the content of the indirect speech is taken out of the main clause which contains it, becoming the main clause itself. Using free indirect speech may convey the character's words more directly than in normal indirect, as he can use devices such as interjections and exclamation marks, that cannot be normally used within a subordinate clause.

Stream-of-consciousness techniques

Interior monologue (novel)

The interior monologue is a technical device in narrative texts. It renders a character's thoughts in the present tense, **omitting speech markers such as verbs of action and inverted commas**. Although the terms are often confused, **it can be distinguished from the stream of consciousness** by its **relatively structured syntax and possibility of the monologist's addressing himself**. The device allows to render a character's thoughts and emotions more intimately than traditional forms of narration, since all readers learn what the character only says to himself.