

Monologue

Definition of Monologue

Monologue comes from the Greek words *monos*, which means “alone,” and [logos](#), which means “speech.” It is a literary device that is the speech or verbal presentation given by a single [character](#) in order to express his or her collection of thoughts and ideas aloud. Often such a character speaks directly to [audience](#), or to another character. Monologues are found in dramatic medium like films and plays, and also in non-dramatic medium like poetry.

Types of Monologue

There are two types of monologue:

Interior Monologue

In interior monologue, a character externalizes his thoughts, so that the audience can experience his internal thoughts. Often found in plays, movies, and novels, this technique is also called a “[stream of consciousness](#).” Internal monologue can be broken further into two [categories](#): direct and indirect. In a direct interior monologue, an author does not show his presence, and directly reveals his character. In an indirect interior monologue, an author appears as a commentator, guide, presenter, and selector.

Dramatic Monologue

In this type of monologue, a character speaks to the silent listener. This type has theatrical qualities, hence, it is known as dramatic monologue, and is frequently used in poetry.

Difference Between a Monologue and a Soliloquy

Monologue and [soliloquy](#) are similar, as both are speeches presented by a single person. But a major difference between them is that, in monologue, the [speaker](#) reveals his thoughts to the audience, or to any other character; whereas in a soliloquy, the speaker expresses his thoughts to himself, and it does not involve any other characters.

Examples of Monologue in Literature

Example #1: *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (By T. S. Eliot)

“And indeed there will be time
To wonder, ‘Do I dare?’ and, ‘Do I dare?’
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair ...
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.”

This entire poem is written in the form of a dramatic monologue, in which the poet is trying to explore the causes of pain and suffering of an insecure young man who is confused about whether or not he should attend a party. Eliot reveals his thoughts to the audience about how Prufrock feels that, if he goes to the party, it might disturb the entire universe.

Example #2: *My Last Duchess* (By Robert Browning)

“Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, ‘Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark’ — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E’en then would be some stooping ...”

This poem also presents an example of a dramatic monologue, as it has a theatrical quality in which the poet expresses his viewpoint through the speech of his character. The single speaker is addressing the servant of a count.

Example #3: *Romeo and Juliet* (By William Shakespeare)

“But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east and Juliet is the sun!
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief ...
O that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!”

This is a famous balcony scene in which Romeo hides in the garden of the Capulet family, and waits for a glimpse of his beloved Juliet. When she comes out on the balcony, Romeo uses monologue, sharing his thoughts with the audience.

Example #4: *Mrs. Dalloway* (By Virginia Woolf)

In her novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf has presented her characters by using the technique of stream of consciousness, or interior monologue. The consciousness of characters moves backward and forward. Woolf has molded and shaped their personalities at critical moments through interior monologue. Her particular deployment of this technique consists of authorial interjections to provide guidance to the readers and give shape to the [narrative](#).

Function of Monologue

The purpose of writing in monologue is to convey an idea or viewpoint through words. However, sometimes we notice a tricky part of a writer's expression, as the opinions of speaker and writer do not match, because he tries to convince the audience, and may not tell the exact reality. It allows readers to move from one character to another, and to have insight into their imaginations. A monologue serves as a basic source through which

