

# Point of View

## Definition of Point of View

Point of view is the angle of considering things, which shows us the opinion or feelings of the individuals involved in a situation. In literature, point of view is the mode of narration that an author employs to let the readers “hear” and “see” what takes place in a story, poem, or [essay](#).

Point of view is a reflection of the opinion an individual from real life or [fiction](#) has. Examples of point of view belong to one of these three major kinds:

**First person** point of view involves the use of either of the two pronouns “I” or “we.”

“I felt like I was getting drowned with shame and disgrace.”

**Second person** point of view employs the pronoun “you.”

“Sometimes you cannot clearly discern between anger and frustration.”

**Third person** point of view uses pronouns like “he,” “she,” “it,” “they,” or a name.

“ **Stewart** is a principled man. **He** acts by the book and never lets you deceive **him** easily.”

## Examples of Point of View in Literature

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### Example #1: *Hamlet* (By William Shakespeare)

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Hamlet, the [protagonist](#), explains the feeling of melancholy that afflicts him after his father’s death:

“**I** have of late, — but wherefore **I** know not, — lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory.”

This is one of the best first-person point of view examples in literature. The use of first-person point of view gives us a glimpse into the real inner feelings of frustration of the [character](#). The writer has utilized the first-person point of view to expose Hamlet’s feelings in a detailed way.

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### **Example #2: *Daffodils* (By William Wordsworth)**

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“**I** gazed – and gazed – but little thought  
What wealth the show to **me** had brought.”

Notice how William Wordsworth uses the first-person point of view to express his [subjective](#) feelings about the scene of daffodils in his famous poem. The use of the pronoun “**I**” gives a special quality to the feelings expressed in these lines. The reader can see that the poet has employed first-person point of view to share with us his own personal emotions.

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### **Example #3: *The Sun also Rises* (By Ernest Hemingway)**

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Ernest Hemingway, in *The Sun also Rises*, employs the first-person point of view which is peculiar to his [style](#).

“**I** could picture it. **I** have a habit of imagining the conversations between my friends. **We** went out to the Cafe Napolitain to have an aperitif and watch the evening crowd on the Boulevard.”

The use of two first person pronouns, “**I**” and “**we**,” gives these lines the quality of having a first person point of view. The reader can feel like he or she is hearing the [dialogue](#) directly from the characters.

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### **Example #4: *Bright Lights, Big City* (By Jay McInerney)**

“You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning. But here you are, and you cannot say that the terrain is entirely unfamiliar, although the details are fuzzy.”

Here, the writer illustrates the use of second-person point of view with the use of the pronoun “you.” This technique may be less common, but it has its own strength of hooking the reader right from the start.

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#### **Example #5: *Pride and Prejudice* (By Jane Austen)**

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“When Jane and Elizabeth were alone, the former, who had been cautious in her praise of Mr. Bingley before, expressed to her sister how very much she admired him.”

“He is just what a young man ought to be,” said she, “sensible, good humoured, lively; and I never saw such happy manners! — so much ease, with such perfect good breeding!”

These lines demonstrate a fine use of the third-person point of view. The excerpt shows the reader two different ways of using third person point of view. Jane Austen first presents two leading characters – Jane and Elizabeth – from the third-person point of view, and then shows us that the two characters are talking about Bingley from their own third-person point of view. This can be a good example of the use of dual third person point of view – first by the author, and then by the characters.

### **Function of Point of View**

Point of view is an integral tool of description in the author’s hands to portray personal emotions or characters’ feelings about an experience or situation. Writers use a point of view to express effectively what they want to convey to their readers.