

Point of View

Foundation Lesson—High School

About this Lesson

Discovering the effect that point of view has on tone and meaning can be an exciting process for middle grades students. However, it is not enough simply to be able to label the different points of view in a professionally written text; a student's real understanding will come through the conscious manipulation of point of view in his or her own writing.

In the activities that follow, students are invited to experiment with shifts in point of view as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the purposeful use of a particular point of view. Realizing that point of view is not an accidental or random choice on the part of an author can transform students' understanding of close reading for tone as well as their abilities to use point of view as a writer's tool.

Passages for LTF® lessons are selected to challenge students, while lessons and activities make texts accessible. Guided practice with challenging texts allows students to gain the proficiency necessary to read independently at or above grade level.

This lesson is included in Module 1: Introduction to Laying the Foundation.

Objectives

Students will:

- understand what point of view is.
- understand that authors deliberately choose point of view for effect.
- analyze the author's use of point of view for effect.
- compare/contrast differing points of view.
- create original text in which they deliberately manipulate point of view.

Level

High School

Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

LTF Foundation Lessons are designed to be used across grade levels and therefore are aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards. Teachers should consult their own grade-level for grade-specific standards. The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

Explicitly addressed in lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	Understand	III

R.3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	Analyze	III
R.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	Analyze	III
R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	Evaluate	III
R.9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	Analyze	III
R.10	Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	Understand	II
W.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	Create	III
W.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	Create	IV

Implicitly addressed in lesson

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
R.5	Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	Analyze	III
L.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Understand	I
L.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	Understand	I
W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Create	III
W.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Analyze	III
W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Apply	III
SL.1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Understand	II

SL.2	Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	Evaluate	III
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LTF Skill Focus

The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

Levels of Thinking					
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Close Reading <i>written, spoken, and visual texts</i>			Grammar <i>purposeful use of language for effect</i>		
Reading Strategies Annotation Determining Author's Purpose			Composition <i>written, spoken, and visual products</i>		
Literary Elements Point of View person perspective				Types (modes) Expository analytical Narrative	
Literary Techniques Characterization				The Process of Composition Drafting analysis of poetry and prose	
				Style/Voice Deliberate Manipulation of Point of View	

Materials and Resources

- copies of Student Activity
- Composition Foundation Lesson: “A Moment in Time: Analyzing Visual Images”
- excerpt from *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier
- excerpt from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters
- excerpt from *Anthem* by Ayn Rand
- excerpts from *Ender’s Game* and *Ender’s Shadow* by Orson Scott Card

Connections to AP*

Point of view is important for students taking AP exams because of the frequency with which it is suggested as a basis for analysis on both the AP Literature and Composition and the AP Language and Composition exams. If students can understand an author’s deliberate choice of point of view in constructing meaning, their analysis of rhetoric, poetry, and prose will have a level of understanding that many other students have difficulty achieving.

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Assessments

The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:

- guided questions
- imaginative writing assignment
- analytical writing assignment

Teaching Suggestions

When teaching close reading for any skill, it is important that students begin with a focused annotation. Students should read the three poems from *Witness* and annotate for any patterns and contrasts that they see within each poem and among the poems. Teachers should ask students how the point of view of each affects the patterns that they see in these poems.

After students have practiced the use of point of view using the steps in the student activity portion, teachers may wish to include some or all of the supplemental activities in their lesson plans.

Supplemental activities:

Students should describe the scene on art transparencies from various points of view.

Students could write from the point of view of

- first person as one of the characters
- a third person limited omniscient view
- a third person omniscient view
- a character looking back on this event
- an objective narrator who records only what can be seen or heard

Teachers should discuss the effect of seeing things from different points of view.

Students should read *Motel of the Mysteries* by David Macaulay. As a class, students should discuss how people of another age can make erroneous assumptions about their predecessors based on the evidence left behind. Teachers should be sure to discuss the illustrations. Some questions the class could discuss include:

- How does the point of view of the narrator create irony and humor?
- How are perspective and shared experience linked?

Then students should select another common household object, and using the same style as the book, explain how someone from the future, past, or another world who does not have our shared experience might view the object. Students should illustrate their work and share with the class.

Students should think back to their first day of kindergarten and write a paragraph describing that first day from the point of view of a five-year-old. This paragraph should be written using their non-dominant hand. Students should then write the paragraph about the same day from their current perspective, using their dominant hand. How do the two paragraphs differ? What was the effect of using different hands to write each?

Answers

Answers for this lesson are subjective and will vary. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses.

Point of View

Foundation Lesson—High School

Point of view is the perspective from which a narrative is told. Point of view can also refer to the bias of the person or thing through whose eyes the reader experiences the action. Following are some ways of designating point of view.

- **First person:** can be recognized easily because the narrator uses first person pronouns such as “I,” “me,” “my,” “we,” “us,” and “our.”
- **Second person:** a very unusual point of view in which the narrator speaks directly to the reader by using the second person pronoun “you.”
- **Third person:** indicated by the use of third person pronouns such as “he,” “she,” “they,” and “them.” This point of view can have different types of narrators:
 - **Omniscient narrator:** The narrator knows what all the characters are thinking and relates those thoughts to the reader.
 - **Limited narrator:** The narrator knows what only some (usually one or two) characters are thinking and relates those thoughts to the reader.
 - **Objective narrator:** The narrator relates only what the characters do and say and does not reveal the thoughts of any of the characters.

Activity One

Look back at the picture you used for the “A Moment in Time: Analyzing Visual Images” activity. If possible, have someone else who was in the picture or present when the picture was taken write a paragraph describing the scene from their memory and perspective.

1. How long ago was this picture taken?
2. How did the other person’s paragraph differ from your memory of the event?
3. Why do you think you have different memories of this event?

4. Using your description of the event and this paragraph, write an account of the scene as a
- a. third person omniscient narrator
 - b. objective narrator

5. Make a general list of the ways in which a different point of view or perspective can affect or reflect such things as meaning, tone, author's purpose, audience, distance, etc. Continue to add to this list as you work through the other activities.

Activity Two

Read the following paragraphs from *Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier.

My mother did not tell me they were coming. Afterwards she said she did not want me to appear nervous. I was surprised, for I thought she knew me well. Strangers would think I was calm. I did not cry as a baby. Only my mother would note the tightness along my jaw, the widening of my already wide eyes.

I was chopping vegetables in the kitchen when I heard voices outside our front door—a woman's, bright as polished brass, and a man's, low and dark like the wood of the table I was working on. They were the kind of voices we heard rarely in our house.

I could hear rich carpets in their voices, books and pearls and fur.

I was glad that earlier I had scrubbed the front steps so hard.

My mother's voice—a cooking pot, a flagon—approached from the front room. They were coming to the kitchen. I pushed the leeks I had been chopping into place, then set the knife on the table, wiped my hands on my apron and pressed my lips together to smooth them.

My mother appeared in the doorway, her eyes two warnings.

1. The passage is written from the _____ point of view.
2. Is this passage written as though the event were happening now or as a reflection on an earlier event? _____ **Highlight the word(s)** in the paragraph that support your answer and briefly explain how they do so.

3. Fill in the chart with *evidence* from the passage that leads to an *inference* about the character. Write *commentary* explaining how the *evidence* leads to the *inference*. You must have at least three entries.

Evidence	<u>Inference</u> —Commentary

4. Complete this activity on your own paper. Rewrite the paragraphs from a third person limited narrator's point of view. Change the words necessary to shift the point of view and to keep pronoun references clear.
5. Does the shift in point of view change your perception about the character?
- Justify your answer.
 - Which narrator seems the most trustworthy? Justify your answer.
 - What is Chevalier's purpose in selecting this point of view?
6. Complete this activity on your own paper. Rewrite the paragraphs again from an objective narrator's point of view.
7. What is lost and/or gained by shifting to this point of view? Justify your answer.

Activity Three

Spoon River Anthology by Edgar Lee Masters is a collection of poems written from the perspectives of the dead townspeople of the fictional Spoon River. Read the following poems and answer the questions that follow.

“Mrs. Charles Bliss”

REVEREND WILEY advised me not to divorce him
For the sake of the children,
And Judge Somers advised him the same.
So we stuck to the end of the path.
But two of the children thought he was right,
And two of the children thought I was right.
And the two who sided with him blamed me,
And the two who sided with me blamed him,
And they grieved for the one they sided with.
And all were torn with the guilt of judging,
And tortured in soul because they could not admire
Equally him and me.
Now every gardener knows that plants grown in cellars
Or under stones are twisted and yellow and weak.
And no mother would let her baby suck
Diseased milk from her breast,
Yet preachers and judges advise the raising of souls
Where there is no sunlight, but only twilight,
No warmth, but only dampness and cold—
Preachers and judges!

“Rev. Lemuel Wiley”

I PREACHED four thousand sermons,
I conducted forty revivals,
And baptized many converts.
Yet no deed of mine
Shines brighter in the memory of the world,
And none is treasured more by me:
Look how I saved the Blisses from divorce,
And kept the children free from that disgrace,
To grow up into moral men and women,
Happy themselves, a credit to the village.

1. Mrs. Charles Bliss’s attitude toward preachers and judges can be described as _____, _____, and _____.
2. On the other hand, Reverend Wiley’s attitude toward his actions can be described as _____, _____, and _____.

3. Who, if anyone, is right? Justify your answer.
4. How does seeing this action from two different perspectives create
 - a. irony?
 - b. pathos?
5. Select one of the following activities to complete on your own paper.
 - a. Write a dramatic monologue from the point of view of one of Mrs. Bliss's children.
 - b. Select another poem from *Spoon River Anthology*, and write a dramatic monologue from the point of view of one of the other characters mentioned in the poem.
6. In your dramatic monologue, the speaker's attitude can be described as _____, _____, and _____.

Activity Four

Read the following paragraphs from *Anthem* by Ayn Rand and answer the questions that follow.

It is dark here. The flame of the candle stands still in the air. Nothing moves in this tunnel save our hand on the paper. We are alone here under the earth. It is a fearful word, alone. The laws say that none among men may be alone, ever and at any time, for this is the great transgression and the root of all evil. But we have broken many laws. And now there is nothing here save our one body, and it is strange to see only two legs stretched on the ground, and on the wall before us the shadow of our one head. . . .

We were born with a curse. It has always driven us to thoughts which are forbidden. It has always given us wishes which men may not wish. We know that we are evil, but there is no will in us and no power to resist it. This is our wonder and our secret fear, that we know and do not resist.

1. These paragraphs are written from the _____ point of view.
2. What makes these paragraphs different from most things written from this point of view?

3. Make three inferences about the society in which the narrator lives.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. How does the point of view lead to or reinforce these inferences?
5. Shift the passage to second person. Using the passage above, draw one line through words that are to be omitted or changed. Write your changes in the spaces above the lines.
6. Read the passage aloud. Shifting the point of view makes you, the reader, feel _____ and _____ because _____

Activity Five

Read the following passages by Orson Scott Card and answer the questions that follow.

from Ender's Game

[Ender] had only been there a few minutes when someone knocked on the door.

"Go away," he said softly. Whoever was knocking didn't hear him or didn't care. Finally Ender said to come in.

It was Bean.

"Go away, Bean."

Bean nodded but didn't leave. Instead he looked at his shoes. Ender almost yelled at him, cursed at him, screamed at him to leave. Instead he noticed how very tired Bean looked, his whole body bent with weariness, his eyes dark from lack of sleep; and yet his skin was still soft and translucent, the skin of a child, the soft curved cheek, the slender limbs of a little boy. He wasn't eight years old yet. It didn't matter he was brilliant and dedicated and good. He was a child. He was young.

No he isn't, thought Ender. Small, yes. But Bean has been through a battle with a whole army depending on him and on the soldiers that he had led, and he performed splendidly, and they won. There's no youth in that. No childhood. Taking Ender's silence and softening expression as permission to stay, Bean took another step into the room. Only then did Ender see the small slip of paper in his hand.

"You're transferred?" asked Ender. He was incredulous, but his voice came out sounding uninterested, dead.

from Ender's Shadow

Bean knocked at the door.

"Go away," said Ender softly.

Bean knocked again. Then again.

"Come in," said Ender. Bean palmed the door open.

"Go away, Bean," said Ender.

Bean nodded. He understood the sentiment. But he had to deliver his message. So he just looked at his shoes and waited for Ender to ask him his business. Or yell at him. Whatever Ender wanted to do. Because the other toon leaders were wrong. Bean didn't have any special relationship with Ender. Not outside the game.

Ender said nothing. And continued to say nothing.

Bean looked up from the ground and saw Ender gazing at him. Not angry.

Just...watching. What does he see in me, Bean wondered. How well does he know me? What does he think of me? What do I amount to in his eyes?

That was something Bean would probably never know. And he had come here for another purpose. Time to carry it out.

He took a step closer to Ender. He turned his hand so the transfer slip was visible. He didn't offer it to Ender, but he knew Ender would see it.

"You're transferred?" asked Ender. His voice sounded dead. As if he'd been expecting it.

1. The first passage is told from the _____ point of view from the perspective of _____. The second passage is told from the _____ point of view from the perspective of _____.
2. Highlight the words and phrases that are common in both paragraphs.
3. In what way(s) do the two passages differ?
4. How are the passages similar?
5. Explain what is gained by reading both excerpts.

6. Complete this activity on your own paper. Select a passage from a work you have read and write a companion piece, shifting the focus to a different character. Emulate Orson Scott Card's style by keeping some words and phrases the same between the original and your passage.

7. Complete this activity on your own paper. In a carefully developed essay, discuss how the two passages characterize Bean and analyze the techniques Orson Scott Card uses to develop this characterization.