

1.6 The function of point of view

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 12 marks**

KEY WORDS observational to all-knowing 全知 • point of view 叙述视点 • character 人物
• perspective 视角 • plot 情节

Objective

Build the skills to explain the **function of point of view** 视角的作用.

You must be able to:

- state what point of view contributes to a text
- distinguish first-person from third-person narrators
- state the range of third-person knowledge
- explain why point of view limits as well as enables

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ The contribution

Point of view contributes to what narrators, characters or speakers can and cannot provide in a text, based on their level of involvement and intimacy with the details, events or characters. Can and cannot — the limit is part of the function.

■ Two kinds

First-person narrators are involved in the narrative, and their relationship to the plot and other characters shapes their perspective. **Third-person narrators are outside observers.**

■ The range

Third-person narrators' knowledge **may range from observational to all-knowing**, which shapes their perspective; the outside perspective **may not be affected by the events of the narrative.**

■ Limits

Narrators may also be characters, and that role may influence their perspective. What a narrator cannot see is as analytically useful as what they can.

2 Practice

2.1 State what point of view contributes and why the limit matters. [2]

2.2 Distinguish first-person from third-person narrators. [2]

2.3 Third-person knowledge varies.

(a) State the range. [2]

(b) State why what a narrator cannot see is useful. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Third-person narrators are described as [1]

- **A** outside observers
- **B** always involved
- **C** always unreliable
- **D** characters

3.2 The CED says point of view contributes to what a narrator can and [1]

- **A** cannot provide
- **B** must invent
- **C** should hide
- **D** will forget

3.3 A narrator reports a room she never entered.

(a) State what this indicates about the point of view.

[1]

(b) Explain what a reader learns from a narrator's limits.

[2]

Solutions

2.1 it contributes to what a narrator can and cannot provide, based on their level of involvement and intimacy with the details, events or characters.

2.2 first-person narrators are involved in the narrative; third-person narrators are outside observers.

2.3 (a) from observational to all-knowing. (b) the gaps show what the text has chosen to withhold.

3.1 A. outside observers.

3.2 A. cannot provide.

3.3 (a) that it is not a limited first-person account. (b) a limit tells the reader what the text will not give them, which is itself a choice the analysis can discuss.