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examples of other works that feature an omniscient point of view: In third person limited point of view, it's as if the narrator is standing behind one character's shoulder. Third Person Limited Point of View The last point of view an author can use is the third person limited point of view. Just like the omniscient perspective we talked about earlier, texts written in a third person limited point of view use third person pronouns to discuss characters outside of dialogue. The difference between the two is in how much information the narrator shares with the reader. With a third person limited perspective, the narrator is limited to giving you the perspective of a single character. The narrator can peek inside the character's head to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, similar to a first person point of view. Unlike first person, however, a narrator using a third person limited point of view can also zoom out to give readers a better understanding of how the character they're following fits into the text's plot, setting, or situation! Here's an easy way of understanding the difference between a first person, third person omniscient, and a third person limited point of view. Think of the narrator as a person holding a camera. You, as the reader, get to see everything the camera sees. With first person point of view, it's like the character has had the camera implanted in their brain. You can see whatever the character looks at and nothing more. With a third person limited point of view, on the other hand, it's like the narrator is standing behind one character and filming over his shoulder. Not only can you get a sense of what the character is seeing, the narrator can also step back a little bit to show readers what's going on around the character...as long as the character stays in the frame. Third person omniscient is the most comprehensive view. It's as if the narrator is filming from the rafters of the building. They can zoom out to show everyone for a global perspective, or they can zoom in on different events to give you a better idea of what's happening in specific situations. So why would a writer use a third person limited point of view? Well, it's great for situations where knowing every single detail of a story would spoil the plot. Mystery novels, for instance, often use third person limited point of view. It allows the narrator to give you the detective's thoughts and feelings while not spoiling the whodunit! It also allows the writer to focus on developing a single character while giving readers a better view of what's going on around that character. Example of Third Person Limited Point of View: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling Like we mentioned earlier, all texts have a point of view...which means that the Harry Potter stories do, too! Let's look at a passage from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone to get a better idea of how a third person limited point of view works. In this scene, Harry and his friends, Hermione and Ron, are looking through the library to learn more about the sorcerer's stone: Hermione took out a list of subjects and titles she had decided to search while Ron strode off down a row of books and started pulling them off the shelves at random. Harry wandered over to the Restricted Section. He had been wondering for a while if Flamel wasn't somewhere in there. Unfortunately, you needed a specially signed note from one of the teachers to look in any of the restricted books, and he knew he'd never get one. These were the books containing powerful Dark Magic never taught at Hogwarts, and only read by older students studying advanced Defense Against the Dark Arts. It's clear that this passage is written in third person: the narrator uses pronouns like "he," "she," and "them," instead of first person pronouns like "I" or second person pronouns like "you." But how do we know it's third person limited? Well, we get Harry's thoughts and feelings—like his curiosity about Nicholas Flamel—but no one else's. We don't know what Hermione and Ron are reading, or if they're excited, nervous, or scared. Rowling wrote all seven Harry Potter books using a third person limited point of view that made Harry the focal point. The narrator can tell us what Harry's thinking, feeling, and seeing—as well as zoom out to tell us more about the precarious situations he finds himself in. But because the narrator is tied to Harry, they can't give us a glimpse into other characters' minds, nor can it show readers what's happening in other parts of Hogwarts (where Harry isn't). That helps readers get to know Harry, even as it helps Rowling maintain the mystery around the sorcerer's stone (or the chamber of secrets, or the half-blood prince, etc.). Other Works Written in Third Person Limited Point of ViewThe third person limited point of view is a popular perspective for writers to use, so there's no shortage of examples! Here are a few works you might be familiar with that feature a third person limited point of view: What's Next? If you're studying for the AP Literature exam, you'll need to know about more literary devices than point of view. Why not check out our other comprehensive guides, like this one on personification? The more familiar you are with literary terms, what they mean, and how to use them, the better your test score will be! Did you know that there are two English AP tests? One is the literature exam, which focuses on literary analysis and comprehension. The second test is the language exam, which tests your ability to understand argument and write persuasively. Click here to learn more about the AP Language exam, how it differs from the literature exam, and what you need to do to knock it out of the park! After you learn the fundamentals, the best way to prepare for an AP exam is to take practice tests. Check out this article on how to find the best AP practice exams, and learn how to use them to boost your score! These recommendations are based solely on our knowledge and experience. If you purchase an item through one of our links, PrepScholar may receive a commission. Have any questions about this article or other topics? Ask below and we'll reply!