

## Point of View





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## College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading:

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.



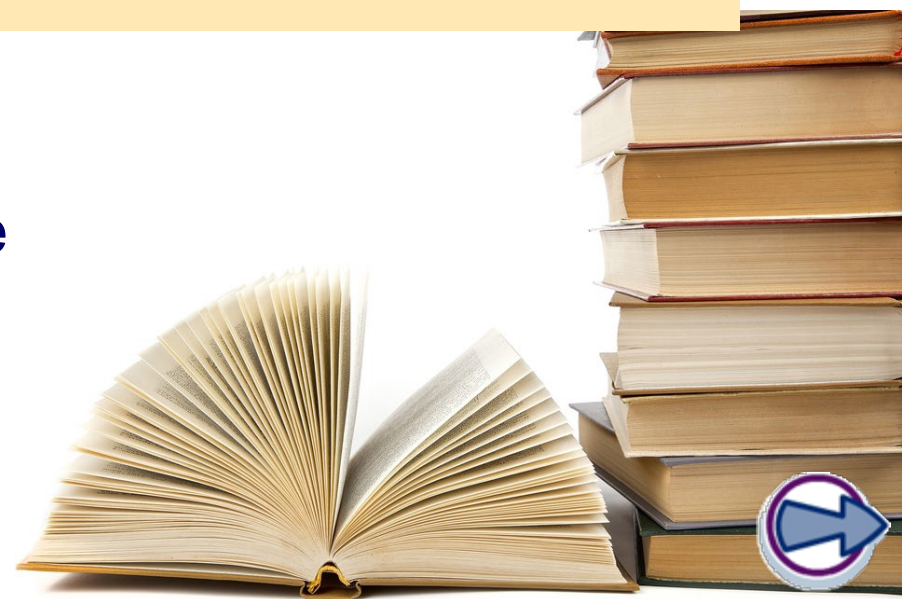
# What is point of view?



**Point of view** is the perspective from which a text is written. This could be the point of view of the author, the narrator or characters – these are not necessarily the same.

When studying any text, it is important to recognize that it is almost impossible for any writer to be **objective**. Their writing may be colored by their point of view on a particular topic.

Writers often use the narrator or characters as vehicles to explore or express a point of view on a political or social topic.



# Types of narrators

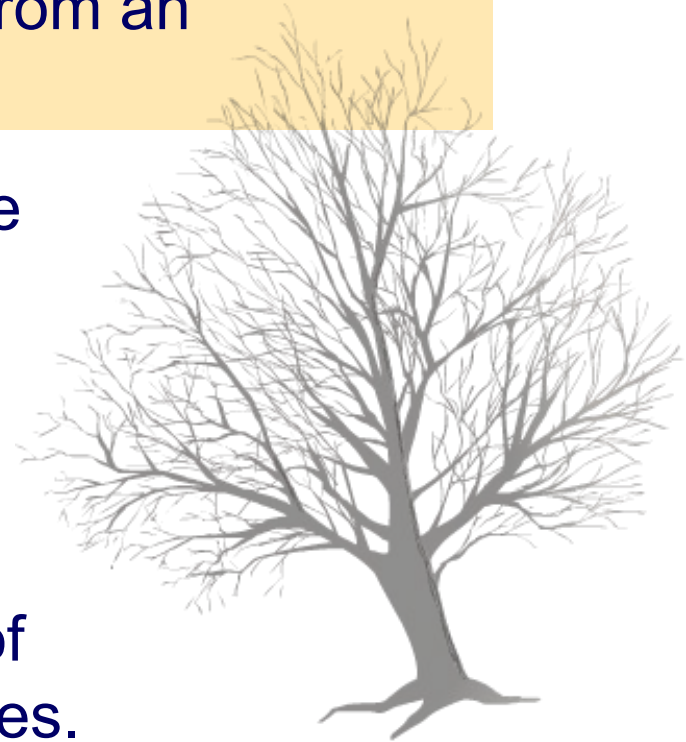


Analyze the following quotation from *Wuthering Heights* and decide what type of narrator you think Lockwood is.

Lockwood offers his insight into Heathcliff's motivations: "I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling."

Lockwood may be unreliable because he makes judgements based on his own view of how he himself would behave.

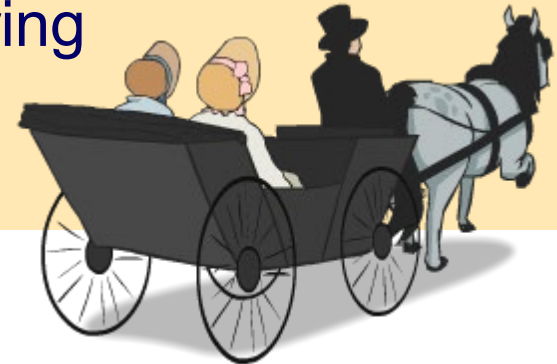
The reader may also consider him inadequate. At this point, they may feel that they have a clearer understanding of Heathcliff's character than Lockwood does.



An author might use a **third-person narrator** to present a more objective view of the events of the narrative.

Some third-person narrators are **omniscient**. An omniscient narrator is able to reveal the thoughts and feelings of any of the characters; they are “all-seeing” or “all-knowing.”

Jane Austen uses a third-person omniscient narrator in *Pride and Prejudice* to reveal characters’ thoughts while at the same time appearing to provide an unbiased description of events and characters.



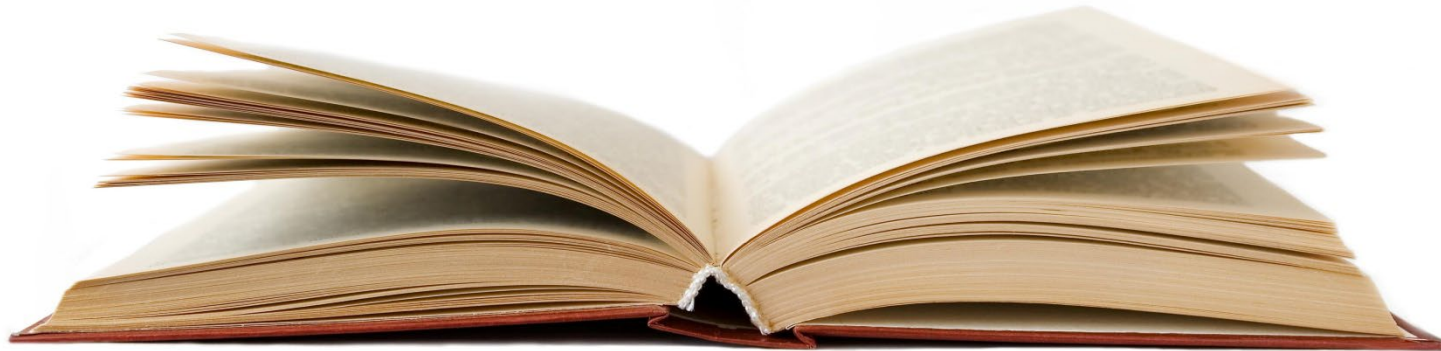
# Pride and Prejudice



**Ideology** refers to a person's attitudes, values and beliefs. These could be social, cultural, political or religious.

Groups in society often have similar ideologies. For example, supporters of a certain political party may have a similar point of view regarding education, social welfare, the family, etc.

In the text you are currently studying, what textual clues can you find that indicate the ideology of the writer?





The contextual influences on the author provide the **context of production**. The context of production helps shape the author's point of view. It may include:

- time and place in which a text was written
- social behavior and opinions
- contemporary events.

The author's point of view is not the only one that should be taken into consideration. The contextual influences on the reader provide the **context of reception**.



The context of reception determines how audiences from different times and places interpret the same text.



# Researching context



# Context of production



Consider the text you are studying. Can you identify any differences between your point of view and the writer's?

The gap between the writer's point of view and that of the reader does not just emerge between historical writers and modern readers.

It also exists between writers and readers from different cultures, classes, genders or political biases.

Consider the following contemporary texts and consider possible causes of the gap between the context of production and reception.



# The God of Small Things



# “Checking Out Me History”



Contextual information should only be included in an essay if it is relevant to the topic or thesis.

For example, if an essay question asks about a character's view on marriage, contemporary attitudes to war would be irrelevant. However, information about religion or social class might be relevant.

Understanding the context of production can help you gain more insight into the author's point of view and their purpose for writing the text. This can help you avoid imposing your own point of view and biases onto the text when analyzing it.

