

# FIRST PERSON NARRATIVE

- A first person narrative is where the story teller (narrator) is relating the story as if they had been there and were directly involved.
- The narrator will use 'I' and 'we' as he talks about events and other characters.
- This can be useful when you don't want the reader to know everything that has happened, e.g. in detective stories when you want the reader to work out the clues rather than being told everything.

# SECOND PERSON NARRATIVE

- Second person means that you write the story using 'you'; the reader is addressed directly as if the story was about them.
- This type of narrative means that the reader is very involved in the story, but there are reasons why it is not used often; for example, it may sound awkward and contrived, and it is difficult to maintain.

# THIRD PERSON NARRATIVE

- This is where the narrator is telling the story, but is not directly involved in the events of the narrative.
- Often a third person narrative will focus on one main character (or one character at a time) as the story is told by that character's point of view. This is sometimes called 'limited third person'. You can also find 'omniscient third person'.

*The man with the twisted lip* by Arthur Conan Doyle

## WHICH NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IS THIS STORY WRITTEN IN?

One night - it was in June, '89 - there came a ring to my bell, about the hour when a man gives his first yawn and glances at the clock. I sat up in my chair, and my wife laid her needle-work down in her lap and made a little face of disappointment.

‘A patient!’ said she. ‘You'll have to go out.’

I groaned, for I was newly come back from a weary day.

We heard the door open, a few hurried words, and then quick steps upon the linoleum. Our own door flew open, and a lady, clad in some dark-coloured stuff, with a black veil, entered the room.

*The Whole Thing—Point of View* by Lois Hebbler

## WHICH NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IS THIS STORY WRITTEN IN?

You walk down 5th Avenue everyday on your way to work. Today on a whim you stop at the flower stall and buy a red carnation. The saleslady helps you pin it to your lapel. You pay her and merge back into the crowd. Pedestrians jostle you, car horns blast as traffic stalls and tempers flair. You try to ignore it all as you gather your thoughts for the coming meeting. Then she cruises into your line of vision and comes to a stop in front of you.

*Mrs Bridge* by Evan S. Connell

## WHICH NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IS THIS STORY WRITTEN IN?

One December morning near the end of the year when snow was falling moist and heavy for miles all around, so that the earth and the sky were indivisible, Mrs. Bridge emerged from her home and spread her umbrella. With small cautious steps she proceeded to the garage, where she pressed the button and waited impatiently for the door to lift. She was in a hurry to drive downtown to buy some Irish lace antimacassars that were advertised in the newspaper, and she was planning to spend the remainder of the day browsing through the stores because it was Harriet's day off and the house was empty - so empty.

# YOUR STYLE

- Think back to stories you have read and the narrative voice.
- Which style did you like?
- Which did you think was more successful?
- What about stories you have written?
- Which style do you prefer?
- Experiment with using first and third person to write a few paragraphs.