

#4 POINT OF VIEW

Skill Strand: Expository

It may take you six days to learn:

1. Some of the choices an author has in the use of point of view
2. How these point of view elements work
3. The structure of an explanatory exposition
4. That you can write an explanatory exposition

PREWRITING

Day One:

It may take a few days for you and your parent to work through the following explanatory material. There are two fairly complicated ideas here, but they're both very important. You must understand the structure of expository writing. If this is your first year working with *Writing Strands*, it will seem complicated. It is not. If you were to read a number of articles in *Reader's Digest*, you would find that authors use a structure for non-fiction much like the one outlined here. You'll have other chances to practice this mode of writing, and you'll get good at structuring your writing this way.

The second important experience in this lesson is the point of view material. Don't expect to understand it all with the first reading. If you haven't worked with point of view material before, this will be new to you. Take it a bit at a time. It'll become clear as you practice it. Much of it's just logical and you already use it correctly.

A book or story isn't told to the reader by the author but by a narrative voice the author creates. This is a strange situation, but it's the way it's done. The author uses this voice to tell the story, and, in the creation of this voice, the author has a number of choices of the kind of voice to use.

On the next page are three of the choices an author has in creating a narrative voice.

THREE NARRATIVE VOICE POINT OF VIEW CHOICES			
NUMBER:	singular	plural	
<hr/>			
PERSON:	first	second	third
<hr/>			
TENSE:	past	present	future

NUMBER

Singular,

First Person:

The narrative voice refers to itself as an individual and not as part of a group and uses *I* as in: *I saw the dog.*

Plural,

First Person:

The narrative voice, although speaking to the reader as an individual, constantly refers to itself as part of the group of characters in the story and uses *we*: *We saw the dog.*

Singular,

Third Person:

The narrative voice refers to one character at a time and talks about groups of people only in the sense of them being observed by one individual: *He saw the boy*, or, *She saw the mayor in the garage.*

Plural,

Third Person:

The narrative voice refers to a group of two or more people, using *they* or *them* as in: *They saw the boy.*

PERSON

First: The narrative voice tells the story as if it had been there and refers to itself as *I*.

Second: This is a very rare voice for an author to use. The narrative voice refers to the reader as *you* which puts the reader in the story.

Third: The narrative voice tells the story as if it had been there and it does not refer to

itself or the reader, but refers to the other characters in the story as *he*, *she* or *they*.

TENSE

Past: The narrative voice tells about things that have already happened.

Present: The narrative voice tells about things as if they're happening at the time it's telling about them.

Future: The narrative voice tells about things that have not happened yet but will.

The following are examples of the uses of these three elements of point of view:

NUMBER: Singular and plural:

Singular: *I saw the dog. He saw the dog.*

Plural: *We saw the dog. They saw the dog.*

PERSON: First and third, singular and plural:

First person singular: *I saw the dog.*

Third person singular: *He saw the dog.*

First person plural: *We saw the dog.*

Third person plural: *They saw the dog.*

TENSE: Past, present, future, first person singular, third person plural:

Past, first person singular: *I saw the dog.*

Past, third person plural: *They saw the dog.*

Present, first person singular: *I see the dog.*

Present, third person plural: *They see the dog.*

Future, first person singular: *I will see the dog.*

Future, third person plural: *They will see the dog.*

This gets fairly complicated and your parent may want you to do some exercises or to study these options or even take a test to see if you understand these choices.

You will write an explanatory exposition (a paper explaining something) **on these three elements** of point of view: **number, person, and tense**. You'll be writing lots of expository papers during the rest of your schooling, so this is something that you'll need to know how to do.

(AGAIN: You will be writing a paper about these three elements of point of view. You will explain each one and show your reader examples of each of them being used that you will find in stories or novels. Read that sentence again.)

Definitions: **Explanatory**: the name given to expositions (essays) which explain the nature of things or how things work.

Exposition: exposing your reader to ideas or information (in this case with an essay).

EXPLANATORY EXPOSITION: An essay which explains something to the reader. The following material may seem hard to understand. Don't panic. It'll all make sense as you work your way through it. Your parent may ask you to read through this explanation and then may read through it with you.

STRUCTURE for EXPLANATORY ESSAYS

INTRODUCTION (has three parts):

1. **Background**: This is information the reader will need to have to understand the main idea (the contention or thesis statement). This can be a history of the subject or some personal experience and/or observation (more about this in a moment).
2. **Contention**: This is a one-sentence statement of position or belief, such as: *Chocolate ice cream is the best kind*, or *Growing up is exciting, but sometimes it's a lot of work*.

This is what some people call the thesis statement. This is the point of the paper and is what the body will explain or show to be true.

3. **Process**: Usually, this is a one-sentence statement giving the order in which the body parts support the contention. Because this kind of writing is made up of *statement* and *support*, everything in the body must be related to the main idea (contention) in a supportive way. (Remember, don't panic.)

These support points in the body must be in the same order as they're listed in the process. (This isn't that complicated. More about it in a moment.)

Some examples should help.

I'll use as an **example** the planning and structuring of an explanatory exposition about how much fun it is to go to the beach.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Background:

We would first have to introduce our reader to the idea of having fun. This part of the introduction, called the **background**, might read like this:

One of the best things about living in this part of the country is being so close to Lake Michigan. When homeschool is over for the summer, all the kids like to hang out together and think of fun things to do.

2. Contention:

We now have to write the contention—one sentence that tells our reader the main point of our essay. For this example, it might read like this:

The one activity that we like to do the most in the summer is go to the beach.
(You're not to write about going to the beach or anywhere.)

3. Process:

The process sentence will have key words that will introduce the reader to the support ideas in the body. These key words will be in the same order as the ideas are in the body. The key words will come from a breakdown of the contending idea. (You may want to read that again. Your parent may then ask you to explain it.)

In our example paper about the fun that could be had at the beach, the key words in the process might be: 1) *swimming*, 2) *eating*, 3) *tanning*, and 4) *building sand castles*. (These four activities are the things that will support the idea that going to the beach is fun.) This **one-sentence** process statement might then read:

The things the kids like to do are swimming, eating, tanning and building sand castles.

This process sentence would tell our reader that we would be explaining about the fun that could be had at the beach by talking about 1) *swimming*, 2) *eating*, 3) *tanning*, and, 4) *building sand castles*.

The order of these key words in this process statement would tell our reader that the first group of paragraphs in our body would talk about the fun of swimming. The second group of paragraphs would talk about the fun of eating. The third group of paragraphs would talk about the fun of tanning. The fourth group of paragraphs would talk about the fun of building sand castles.

We would then have to put the parts of our introduction together:

(Background) One of the best things about living in this part of the country is being so close to Lake Michigan. When school is over for the summer, the kids like to hang out together and think of fun things to do. (Contention) The one activity that we like to do the most in the summer is go to the beach. (Process) There we have fun swimming, eating, tanning and building sand castles.

BODY: (has as many sections of paragraphs as there are key words in the process)

The body, supporting the contention, contains material presented in the same order as are the points (key words) in the process. This is so that the parts of the body—each of which may be composed of a number of paragraphs—will be recognized by the reader as supporting the contending idea in the order set up in the process listing of key words.

CONCLUSION: (has three parts):

1. The first sentence says the same thing that the contention does but does not use the same words. (*Read that again*)
2. The second sentence says that the information in the body is organized but does not use the key words.
3. The third sentence again talks about the ideas of the background.

In this paper you will demonstrate to your reader that you understand point of view by **explaining the various choices an author has and how each one works.**

(NOTE—AGAIN: You will demonstrate to your reader that you understand point of view by explaining the choices an author has and how they work. This is what this paper is all about.)

DIAGRAM OF AN EXPLANATORY EXPOSITION

INTRODUCTION (three parts) -->	1. Background 2. Contention 3. Process
BODY (in this paper --> four sections)	The body should have as many sections of paragraphs as there are key words in the process.
CONCLUSION (three parts) -->	1. Restatement of contending idea (not same words) 2. Mention of organization (do not use the key words) 3. A connection made between the body and the background

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

1. **Background:** This material should explain the function of story-tellers and the idea of the narrative voice and that story-tellers have choices about how they tell their stories. Your parent will give you ideas about this part of the introduction.

2. **Contention:** The main idea for this paper should be that *the choices of point of view are not hard to understand or recognize.*

3. **Process:** The organization of this paper should be based on the choices that an author has in selecting a point of view. (*Remember, there were three*)

In this paper the key words that you're to use in the process sentence are the choices authors have of points of view: *number, person and tense*. This means that you'll have to create a sentence that contains **these key words**.

This is easier than it sounds. Make a sentence with the key words in it in list form. It can be structured like this: *Most of the time I was at the picnic, I was with John, Bill, and Janet.* **In this example only, the key words would be John, Bill, and Janet.**

BODY:

The body of your paper will be organized on the basis of the key words in the process statement. This means that there will be at least one paragraph for each word.

The first key word in your process statement will be *number*, so your first section of paragraphs in the body will be about the point of view choice, *number*.

In this section of your body you should explain how **number is used** by the author and the **choices the author has** in selecting number for his narrative voice. Check again the chart showing the choices and the examples showing how each choice works.

You should **use examples** from short stories or novels to show your reader how the different choices work. If you can't find examples you might make them up.

There will be **three key words** in your process statement, so there will be **three sections to the body of your paper**.

CONCLUSION:

Your conclusion will have three parts:

1. The **contention restated** (do not to use words that you used in the introduction)
2. The **process restated** (remember not to use the key words) This is hard to do. Your restatement of the process could read like this: *An author has three elements available to create a narrative voice.*
3. A statement that shows that there is a **relationship** between the body of your paper and your background.

The background of this paper will tell the reader an author has choices, and the body of this paper will explain the function of these choices the author has. Conclusions are very hard to write, and your parent will have to work with you on this part of your paper. Do **not** begin your conclusion with the words, *In conclusion*.

WRITING

Work on the introduction. The first thing you should write is the contention—that statement which identifies for the reader the point of the paper. This will become the **second** part of your introduction. It should have to do with it being easy to identify the choices an author has when creating a narrative voice. Write it here:

The reason you should write the contention (the second item in the introduction) first, is because it makes no sense to introduce the reader to an idea before you know what that idea is. The next step should be the writing of the process. This is the third part of your introduction, and it will show how the body of your paper will be set up.

The process for this paper will contain these three key words: (*point of view choices*)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Using these three “key words,” write the sentence which will become your process sentence here:

Background:

This part of your introduction must present to your readers enough information so that they can understand the contention. In this paper you might talk about what it means to tell a story. Remember that the author isn’t the storyteller, it’s the narrative voice which has been created by the author which tells the story. The author has to build the narrative voice from the parts available. Those parts are the choices of point of view. Write your background:

Preparation:

You should prepare a rewritten introduction for day two.

Day Two:

If you’re still having trouble with the introduction, make sure you ask your parent for help early in the session. You should write the first section of the body today. It should be about the author’s **choices of person** for his narrative voice.

You should be able to find material in any book of short stories or in the library as examples to **support your points**. There should be **one example for each** of the choices the author has for a selected voice.

This means that you should find a sentence in support of the first point in which the narrative voice speaks in first person. Then you will have to find one in which the voice speaks in third person. When you have this written, make sure your parent checks your work.

Preparation:

Write the second point and rewrite the finished rough draft of the first point.

Day Three:

Ask your parent to read your second point today. You'll be writing the third point.

Preparation:

Write the finished rough draft of the second and third points.

Day Four:

Ask your parent to read over your rewriting of the second and third points. You should begin writing your paper's final draft. This means you will have to check for spelling and mechanical errors.

Day Five:

You should write the rough draft of the conclusion.

Day Six:

You will be finishing the final draft today. Give your finished paper to your parent on day seven.

If you've not finished with this paper by day seven, that's not a serious problem. It may mean that you're doing such a good job that you can't keep to this schedule. So what? We all work at our own speeds. The important thing is that you understand the ideas in this paper. If it takes you another two or three days to do that, that's okay.

(Remember: Name, Date, paper title, skipping lines, margins and page numbers.)

Fill out the "Record of Progress" on the next page. I recommend you now take a week off from writing and concentrate on reading and discussing ideas with your parents

(If you did a good job on this paper, you need at least a week!)

(That's my one exclamation point for this year.)

RECORD OF PROGRESS

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exercise #4 POINT OF VIEW

This is the best paragraph I wrote this week.

This mistake I made this week and I will not make it next week.

This is the sentence that had this mistake in it.

This is the sentence again showing how I fixed this mistake.

Comments: