

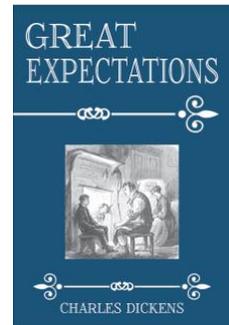
Let's Talk About Point of View
By Erin Yun



When I first learned about point of view in school, the concept didn't particularly interest me. It wasn't until I started thinking about point of view as a storytelling tool that I grew excited about how dramatically it can change a narrative.

Whenever I go over point of view with students during my author program, I make sure to emphasize not just what point of view is but also what implications it has for a story. I chose to write my debut novel, *Pippa Park Raises Her Game*, in the first-person POV for several reasons. One is that *Pippa Park* was inspired by Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, and since that book was also written in the first person, it seemed like a natural choice.

More than that, I chose first person because I enjoy getting inside the head of my characters. Even if the plot doesn't necessarily intrigue me when I'm reading a book, I'll still be captivated if I like the characters. That's why I spend a lot of time getting to know my characters—sketching them, playing out random monologues in my head, even taking personality quizzes for them. I want to really understand who they are and where they're coming from, and I find that using first person's "I" helps me connect with them in a way that feels more intuitive than when I use other perspectives.



That's not to say I always write in the first person. I often turn to third-person POV when I'm trying to show the reader information about various characters since and not confined to the head of one person. I also enjoy writing in the third person if I want the voice of my story to be more of a detached narrator. Plus, many of my favorite books are told in third person, from Kate DiCamillo's *The Tale of Despereaux* to Neil Gaiman's *Coraline*. I don't write in second person often, but it can be an interesting challenge and a cool stylistic choice. Kwame Alexander's *Booked* is an excellent example of second person done amazingly well, and I still get emotionally invested in R. L. Stine's *Give Yourself Goosebumps* books.

While there is no best point of view, thinking critically about the different benefits of each perspective is what matters. During my author presentations, I'm always surprised by how invested the students get during the point-of-view sections. Toward the end of my visit, we work together to create an original retelling, and when we consider which point of view is the best fit for our story, passionate debates inevitably occur. Usually, it's the battle between third person and first person, although second person has claimed an underdog victory. No matter which point of view we agree on, when the kids are excited about point of view as a storytelling tool, I count it as a mission accomplished.