

First person narrative uses ‘I’. The storyteller is directly involved in the action of the story: *Curiously, I peered through the thick glass of the spaceship. The world that I saw was barren, unknown, alien.*

Second person narrative is very unusual. It uses ‘you’, and talks directly to the reader, almost as if the story is about them: *Curiously, you peer through the thick glass of the spaceship. The world that you see is barren, unknown, alien.* (Note the change of tense here; second person does not really work with past tense.)

Third person narrative is told by a narrator who knows what has happened and has access to the characters’ thoughts and feelings, but is not directly involved in the story: *Curiously, Joe peered through the thick glass of the spaceship. The world that he saw was barren, unknown, alien.*

Task 1

Mark these pieces of text ‘first’, ‘second’, or ‘third’ depending on which narrative voice they use.

- A. He was served by the same waiter as the night before and ordered the same drink, double espresso in a foam cup, no sugar, no spoon. He paid for it as soon as it arrived and left his change on the table.
- B. Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening.
- C. You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning. But here you are, and you cannot say that the terrain is entirely unfamiliar, although the details are fuzzy.
- D. On perceiving me, the stranger addressed me in English, although with a foreign accent. ‘Before I come on board your vessel,’ said he, ‘will you have the kindness to inform me whither you are bound?’
- E. Okay, okay. So hang me. I killed the bird. For pity’s sake, I’m a *cat*. It’s practically my *job* to go creeping around the garden after sweet little eensy-weensy birdy-pies that can hardly fly from one hedge to another.

Task 2: Practising

Read both of the extracts below:

Text 1: Extract from *Once* by Morris Gleitzman (The narrator is Felix.)

I feel for the edge of the table and put my bowl down and wipe my glasses.

That's when I see the carrot.

It's floating in my soup, huge among the flecks of cabbage and the tiny blobs of pork fat and the few lonely lentils and the bits of grey plaster from the kitchen ceiling.

A whole carrot.

I can't believe it. Three years and eight months I've been in this orphanage and I haven't had a whole carrot in my dinner bowl once. Neither has anyone else. Even the nuns don't get whole carrots, and they get bigger servings than us kids because they need the extra energy for being holy.

We can't grow vegetables up here in the mountains. Not even if we pray a lot. It's because of the frosts. So if a whole carrot turns up in this place, first it gets admired, then it gets chopped into enough pieces so that sixty-two kids, eleven nuns and one priest can all have a bit.

I stare at the carrot.

At this moment I'm probably the only kid in Poland with a whole carrot in his dinner bowl. For a few seconds I think it's a miracle. Except it can't be because miracles only happened in ancient times and this is 1942.

Text 2: Extract from *New Moon* by Stephenie Meyer (The narrator is Bella.)

Alice finally seemed to process my mood. 'Okay ... later then. Did you like the scrapbook your mom sent you? And the camera from Charlie?'

I sighed. Of course she knew what my presents were. Edward wasn't the only member of his family with unusual skills. Alice would have 'seen' what her parents were planning as soon as they'd decided that themselves.

We reached Edward then, and he held his hand out for mine. I took it eagerly, forgetting for a moment, my glum mood. His skin was as always smooth, hard and, very cold. He gave my finger a gentle squeeze.

Select one of the above extracts and re-write it using third person.