2 Compare and contrast first- and third-person narrations

Language Objectives

- Identify point of view as first-person or third-person.
- Describe a story's characters, setting, and plot events.
- Use context clues and word relationships to understand new vocabulary.
- Compare and contrast stories.

Building Literacy

Comparing and contrasting texts will help students move beyond what is stated by an author by:

- examining the author's decisions about point of view and which details to reveal to readers.
- focusing on nuances of word choice.
- generating questions to monitor comprehension.
- considering alternate versions of the text.

Focus on Language

Display the following vocabulary words that students will encounter in these texts. Have students use a T-chart to categorize the connotations of the words as Positive or Negative. (Spanish cognates are in parentheses.)

- despised (despreciado)
- exorbitant (exorbitante)
- renowned (renombrado)
- frantic (frenético)
- distress
- sympathetically (simpáticamente)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Provide your English learners with opportunities to interact with English-speaking classmates to enhance their language skills. Working in pairs or small groups will give English learners a chance to practice English in a relaxed environment.

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show me

In this lesson, students will compare a third-person story about a fictional kingdom with a first-person story about a missing essay.

Say: Today, you are going to **compare and contrast** two stories, or find ways they are the same and different. One element you can compare and contrast is **point of view**, or how the story is told. In a **first-person** point of view, the narrator is a character in the story. In a **third-person** point of view, the narrator is *not* a character in story.

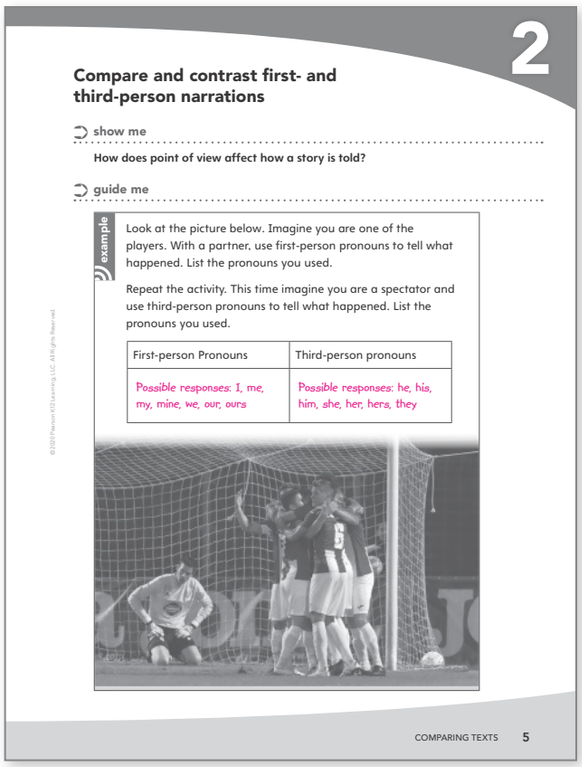
Have student pairs discuss a well-known children's story and identify whether it is told from a first-person or third-person point of view. Ask them to consider whether they know the personal thoughts and feelings of the narrator about the events of the story, or whether it is told from the perspective of an outsider. Have volunteers share their responses with the class.

guide me

Use the **guide me** to activity to help students practice **contrasting** different points of view. Have a student volunteer describe what is happening in the picture. (A group of soccer players celebrates a goal, while the opposing team's goalie looks upset.) Discuss that the players took part in the event but the people watching the game just observe it, so they will use different pronouns to describe the goal.

Have partners choose a person in the picture to use as the narrator. Prompt partners to describe the event from the first-person point of view of one of the players and complete the chart with the pronouns they used (for example: I, me, mine, we, our, ours).

Then, have partners repeat the activity using the third-person point of view of a game spectator (for example: he, his, him, they).



2

Compare and contrast first- and third-person narrations

show me

How does point of view affect how a story is told?

guide me

example

Look at the picture below. Imagine you are one of the players. With a partner, use first-person pronouns to tell what happened. List the pronouns you used.

Repeat the activity. This time imagine you are a spectator and use third-person pronouns to tell what happened. List the pronouns you used.

First-person Pronouns	Third-person pronouns
Possible responses: I, me, my, mine, we, our, ours	Possible responses: he, his, him, she, her, hers, they

COMPARING TEXTS 5

VISUAL LITERACY

Some students may feel more comfortable demonstrating their knowledge of content area vocabulary through drawing instead of writing. For example, have students work in small groups to draw pictures that represent first-person and third-person points of view. Then, have volunteers present and discuss their drawings with the class.

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work time

Introduce Vocabulary Write the following vocabulary words on the board and point out their Spanish cognates: **despised, exorbitant, renowned**. Have students list words with similar meanings. Then have them use a graphic organizer to put the words in order from weakest to strongest or least descriptive to most descriptive.

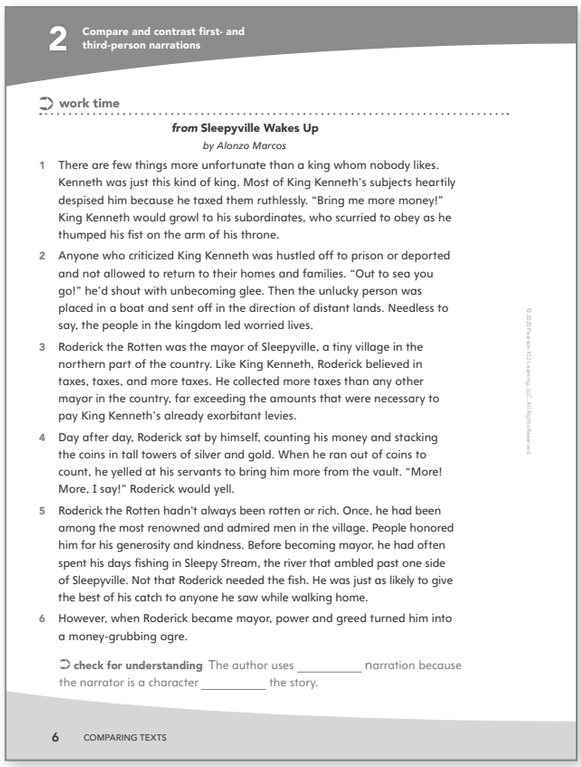
Read—Pause—Sketch Use the following interactive strategy to promote a strategic reading of the text.

Have student pairs take turns reading "Sleepyville Wakes Up" aloud. After each student reads a paragraph, partners will pause and draw a sketch about an event in that section. Prompt partners to share and discuss their sketches when they are finished reading the text.

Analyze Author's Craft and Style: Characterization Read aloud paragraph 1, emphasizing the phrases "heartily despised," "growl to his subordinates, who scurried to obey," and "thumped his fist." Ask a volunteer to explain what each phrase means, and discuss how these descriptions help readers understand what King Kenneth is like.

Then, have partners read through the rest of the text and note other words or phrases that are particularly descriptive. Invite volunteers to explain how the word choice affects the reader's understanding of the characters in the story.

check for understanding by having students complete the sentence frame about the narrator. (The author uses third-person narration because the narrator is a character outside the story.)


2 Compare and contrast first- and third-person narrations

work time

***from* Sleepyville Wakes Up**

by Alonzo Marcos

1 There are few things more unfortunate than a king whom nobody likes. Kenneth was just this kind of king. Most of King Kenneth's subjects heartily despised him because he taxed them ruthlessly. "Bring me more money!" King Kenneth would growl to his subordinates, who scurried to obey as he thumped his fist on the arm of his throne.

2 Anyone who criticized King Kenneth was hustled off to prison or deported and not allowed to return to their homes and families. "Out to sea you go!" he'd shout with unbecoming glee. Then the unlucky person was placed in a boat and sent off in the direction of distant lands. Needless to say, the people in the kingdom led worried lives.

3 Roderick the Rotten was the mayor of Sleepyville, a tiny village in the northern part of the country. Like King Kenneth, Roderick believed in taxes, taxes, and more taxes. He collected more taxes than any other mayor in the country, far exceeding the amounts that were necessary to pay King Kenneth's already exorbitant levies.

4 Day after day, Roderick sat by himself, counting his money and stacking the coins in tall towers of silver and gold. When he ran out of coins to count, he yelled at his servants to bring him more from the vault. "More! More, I say!" Roderick would yell.

5 Roderick the Rotten hadn't always been rotten or rich. Once, he had been among the most renowned and admired men in the village. People honored him for his generosity and kindness. Before becoming mayor, he had often spent his days fishing in Sleepy Stream, the river that ambled past one side of Sleepyville. Not that Roderick needed the fish. He was just as likely to give the best of his catch to anyone he saw while walking home.

6 However, when Roderick became mayor, power and greed turned him into a money-grubbing ogre.

check for understanding The author uses _____ narration because the narrator is a character _____ the story.

6 COMPARING TEXTS

CRITICAL LITERACY

Students become good critical thinkers when they are able to look beyond the words on a page in order to make connections to real-world experiences and other texts.

Have students practice thinking critically by reflecting on these questions after reading:

- What other stories have you read that feature cruel, greedy characters?
- Would you want someone like King Kenneth or Roderick the Rotten in charge of your country, state, or city? Why or why not?
- What traits make a good leader? How can leaders earn the respect of the people they govern?

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work time

Introduce Vocabulary Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **frantic, distress, sympathetically**. Point out the Spanish cognates for *frantic* and *sympathetically*. Then, have students discuss why the author chose to use these words instead of *worried, sadness*, or *kindly*.

Read—Pause—Discuss Use the following interactive strategy to promote a strategic reading of the text.

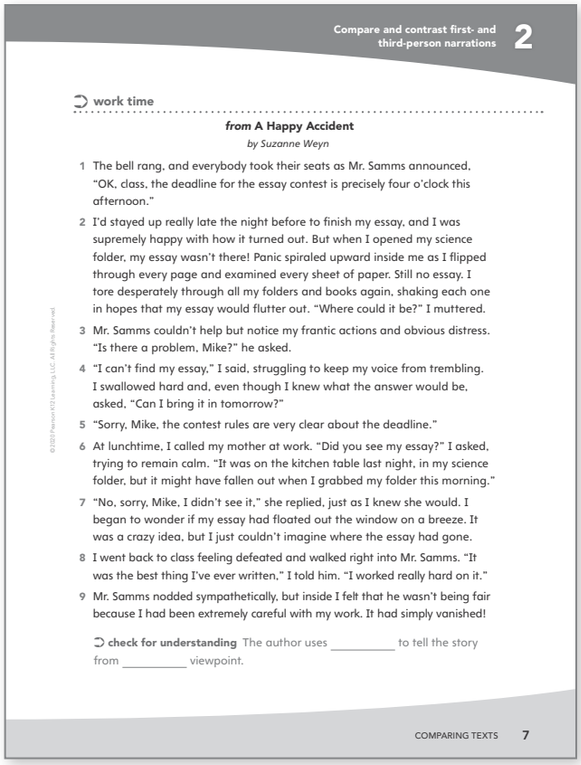
Have student pairs take turns reading "A Happy Accident" aloud. After each student reads two paragraphs, have him or her pause to ask his or her partner questions about what they just read. Have them continue this process until they finish reading.

Analyze Author's Craft and Style: Point of View When the narrator is one of the characters in the story, he or she can reveal to readers personal thoughts and feelings that the other characters do not know.

Have a volunteer read aloud paragraph 2. Discuss how the narrator describes looking for his essay ("Panic spiraled upward inside me as I flipped through every page…"; "I tore desperately…in hopes that my essay would flutter out.") Point out that while other people may see his actions, they do not know what he is thinking or feeling as he does them.

Then, have students work in pairs to read through paragraphs 7 through 9 and identify text details that convey the narrator's feelings. Ask students to consider which details Mr. Samms would know and which details are only known by the narrator.

check for understanding by having students complete the sentence frame about point of view. (The author uses a first-person point of view to tell the story from Mike's viewpoint.)


Compare and contrast first- and third-person narrations 2

work time

from A Happy Accident

by Suzanne Weyn

1 The bell rang, and everybody took their seats as Mr. Samms announced, "OK, class, the deadline for the essay contest is precisely four o'clock this afternoon."

2 I'd stayed up really late the night before to finish my essay, and I was supremely happy with how it turned out. But when I opened my science folder, my essay wasn't there! Panic spiraled upward inside me as I flipped through every page and examined every sheet of paper. Still no essay. I tore desperately through all my folders and books again, shaking each one in hopes that my essay would flutter out. "Where could it be?" I muttered.

3 Mr. Samms couldn't help but notice my frantic actions and obvious distress. "Is there a problem, Mike?" he asked.

4 "I can't find my essay," I said, struggling to keep my voice from trembling. I swallowed hard and, even though I knew what the answer would be, asked, "Can I bring it in tomorrow?"

5 "Sorry, Mike, the contest rules are very clear about the deadline."

6 At lunchtime, I called my mother at work. "Did you see my essay?" I asked, trying to remain calm. "It was on the kitchen table last night, in my science folder, but it might have fallen out when I grabbed my folder this morning."

7 "No, sorry, Mike, I didn't see it," she replied, just as I knew she would. I began to wonder if my essay had floated out the window on a breeze. It was a crazy idea, but I just couldn't imagine where the essay had gone.

8 I went back to class feeling defeated and walked right into Mr. Samms. "It was the best thing I've ever written," I told him. "I worked really hard on it."

9 Mr. Samms nodded sympathetically, but inside I felt that he wasn't being fair because I had been extremely careful with my work. It had simply vanished!

check for understanding The author uses _____ to tell the story from _____ viewpoint.

COMPARING TEXTS 7

VISUAL LITERACY

Monitor students' understanding after reading by having them draw the part of the story they find most interesting. Then, have them share their drawings with their classmates. Drawing activities engage visual learners while providing evidence of reading comprehension.

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check for understanding

Analyze Author's Craft and Style Have students work with a partner to answer the **check for understanding** questions.

If students struggle to understand how the point of view would change in an alternate version of the story, use a Think Aloud to model how a critical thinker would approach the text.

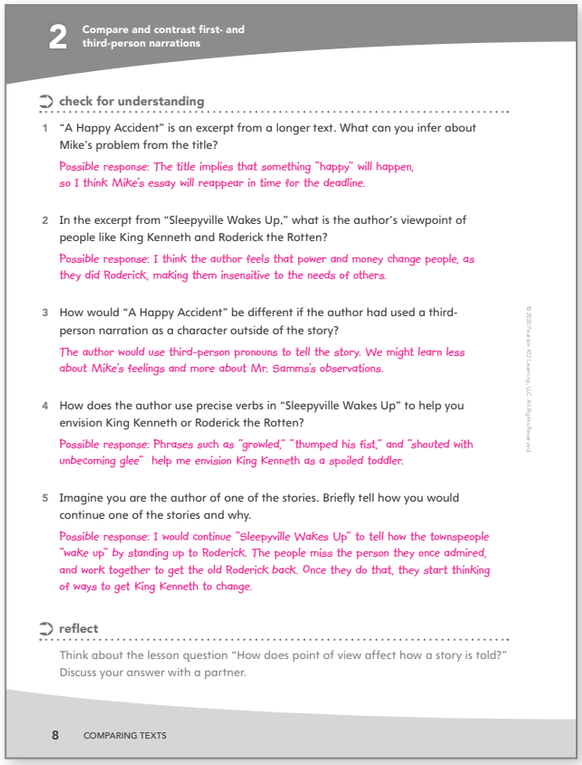
Think Aloud Before I think about the point of view in a different version of the story, first let me think about the point of view in this version. The author of "A Happy Accident" uses a first-person point of view to tell the story from Mike's perspective. Since Mike is the narrator, he can tell readers how frantic and desperate he feels when he's trying to find his essay. Now I'll think about how a third-person narrator would tell the story differently. This narrator would not be a character in the story, so he or she might not know as much about Mike's feelings. However, a third-person narrator could tell readers more details about other characters in the story, such as Mr. Samms.

Story Structure To continue a story, students will need to identify the major story elements presented in the story so far. Guide students' thinking by asking the following questions:

- Who are the main characters? What are they like?
- Where and when does the story take place? Does it make sense for the setting to change?
- What plot events have happened so far? Does the author give any hints about what could happen next?

reflect

Have students work with a partner to discuss how point of view affects how a story is told. Students may look back to the **guide me** activity and their answer to **check for understanding** item 3 to inform their responses.



2 Compare and contrast first- and third-person narrations

check for understanding

1 "A Happy Accident" is an excerpt from a longer text. What can you infer about Mike's problem from the title?

Possible response: The title implies that something "happy" will happen, so I think Mike's essay will reappear in time for the deadline.

2 In the excerpt from "Sleepyville Wakes Up," what is the author's viewpoint of people like King Kenneth and Roderick the Rotten?

Possible response: I think the author feels that power and money change people, as they did Roderick, making them insensitive to the needs of others.

3 How would "A Happy Accident" be different if the author had used a third-person narration as a character outside of the story?

The author would use third-person pronouns to tell the story. We might learn less about Mike's feelings and more about Mr. Samms's observations.

4 How does the author use precise verbs in "Sleepyville Wakes Up" to help you envision King Kenneth or Roderick the Rotten?

Possible response: Phrases such as "growled," "thumped his fist," and "shouted with unbecoming glee" help me envision King Kenneth as a spoiled toddler.

5 Imagine you are the author of one of the stories. Briefly tell how you would continue one of the stories and why.

Possible response: I would continue "Sleepyville Wakes Up" to tell how the townspeople "wake up" by standing up to Roderick. The people miss the person they once admired, and work together to get the old Roderick back. Once they do that, they start thinking of ways to get King Kenneth to change.

reflect

Think about the lesson question "How does point of view affect how a story is told?" Discuss your answer with a partner.

8 COMPARING TEXTS

CRITICAL LITERACY

Good critical thinkers are able to see beyond the view of the narrator in order to understand a character's choices and reactions. In "A Happy Accident," Mike believes Mr. Samms is treating him unfairly.

To consider whether this portrayal is accurate, have students discuss how the story would be different if the roles were switched. How would Mike feel if he were the teacher and someone asked him to bend the rules when everyone else had followed them? How would Mr. Samms feel if he worked hard on something that suddenly went missing?

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Compare and contrast first- and third-person narrations

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guide me

example

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Repeat the activity. This time imagine you are a spectator and use third-person pronouns to tell what happened. List the pronouns you used.

First-person Pronouns	Third-person pronouns

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check for understanding

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5 Imagine you are the author of one of the stories. Briefly tell how you would continue one of the stories and why.

reflect

Think about the lesson question "How does point of view affect how a story is told?" Discuss your answer with a partner.

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