

UNDERSTAND THE TEKS

The **narrator** is the person who tells the story. Sometimes the narrator is a character; sometimes the narrator is an outside storyteller.

The narrator describes events from a specific **point of view**, or perspective. This perspective shapes what the reader learns about the characters and events.

A story can be told in the first person or in the third person. When a story is told in the **first person**, a character in it is the narrator. This character may be the main character, or *protagonist*, telling about what happened to him or her. The protagonist, of course, is at the center of the story. The narrator may be another character telling the story of the events that happened to the main character. This type of narrator is **not** at the center of the action.

A first-person narrator uses the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *my* to refer to himself or herself. The narrator has a *persona*, or personality, that affects what he or she tells and speaks with a distinctive *voice* that reveals this persona.

When you read a story told in the first-person, you get a sense of immediacy and intimacy. However, the first-person narrator can tell only what he or she knows or has experienced. In addition, this narrator may be unreliable—not truly understanding what happened—or even biased. For example, imagine that the main character's rival tells the story of a competition between them that the main character won. The account might not be objective.

When a story is told in the **third-person**, the narrator and all characters are identified by the pronouns *he*, *she*, *him*, *her*, and *his*. We often think of this narrator as a storyteller who stands outside the story, tells what happens, but doesn't take part in it.

A third-person **omniscient** narrator seems to know everything. This narrator takes you inside the minds of various characters and shows what they are thinking and feeling. The omniscient narrator knows more than any one character in the story does.

A third-person **limited** narrator focuses on one character, showing this character's thoughts and feelings. You learn what is happening from this character's perspective. However, as in first-person narration, you do not learn things that this character would not know.