



# Explaining Point of View

## CCLS

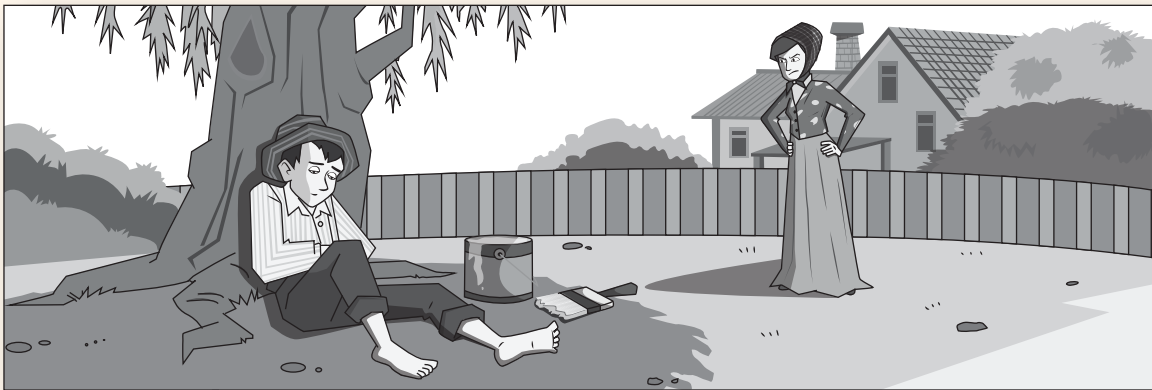
**RL.6.6:** Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

**RL.6.6.a:** Explain how an author's geographic location or culture affects his or her perspective.

Theme: *Culture Shock*

Have you ever had two friends tell you about the same event but hear two very different stories? That's because each one told you how the event looked from his or her **point of view**, or perspective. When you read a story or poem, you get a point of view, too. Sometimes it's the point of view of the author, but often it's the point of view of the **narrator**, or speaker—the voice that tells the story. At other times, you might even experience the events through the eyes of one or more of the characters.

**Think about how a narrator would describe the scene below from the boy's point of view. How would the description differ if it were told from the woman's perspective?**



**Read the chart below. Think about how the details in the illustration suggest each character's point of view.**

Details	Character's Point of View
The boy is leaning against a tree. He looks like he's taking a nap.	The boy is peaceful and content. He feels like it's a lovely, lazy day.
The woman has her hands on her hips and an angry expression on her face.	The woman is angry because the boy is resting instead of painting.

The two characters in the illustration above are having two very different experiences. This results in two very different points of view about the same situation. The boy in the picture might not care that he's not working, but the woman definitely does!

Good readers understand that *how* an event is described is directly affected by *who* is describing it. Thinking about the point of view of the storyteller can help you understand how an author develops characters' attitudes, feelings, or beliefs.



Read the first three paragraphs of a historical fiction story.

Genre: Historical Fiction

## The Settlers *by Rowena Jackson*

Little Bear crept closer and closer through the tall grass until he had a better vantage point to watch the trail of wagons pass. He'd never seen white people before, though his father sometimes traded skins and bows with the men. Little Bear had heard all the warnings, but he still wanted to see what they looked like.

One wagon fell behind the rest of the caravan. The rains of the past few days had turned the trail to thick mud, and the wagon's oxen were tired. They made it another few minutes before Little Bear heard a loud crack, and the back corner of the wagon crashed to the ground.

Two people from the wagon inspected the broken wheel. Little Bear froze when one pulled out a rifle and fired it into the air. He crouched into a small ball in the weeds, his heart drumming in his ears. But then he saw other people running to help the stranded travelers, and he knew that the rifle shot had just been a signal.

(continued)

**Explore how to answer this question:** *"The narrator describes the scene from Little Bear's point of view. What do you find out as a result?"*

In order to understand Little Bear's point of view, first identify words and phrases that reveal his thoughts, feelings, or attitudes in this scene.

**Look for details suggesting how Little Bear feels toward the settlers. Then complete the chart.**

Evidence from the Text	Character's Point of View
	Little Bear is curious about the white settlers but not necessarily afraid of them.
He freezes at the sound of the rifle; he crouches into a ball and his heart beats fast.	

**On the lines below, explain how the narrator's description of Little Bear's experiences influences the reader's understanding of events.**

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## Close Reading

What is Little Bear's attitude toward the white settlers in the last paragraph? **Circle** any clues that suggest how Little Bear feels.

## Hint

Little Bear was curious about the white settlers and then became startled by the rifle. How does he feel now?

Continue reading about Little Bear. Use the Close Reading and Hint to help you complete the chart.

*(continued from page 162)*

Just then, there was a rustle in the grass beside Little Bear. He let out the long breath he'd been holding when he saw it was just his older brother, White Deer, who silently signaled that they needed to return home before the settlers spotted them.

Little Bear followed, but he paused a moment to glance back. Traveling out on the open prairie was dangerous, and the settlers were just people. He hoped the pioneer family got their wagon wheel fixed soon.

Complete the following chart by using evidence to explain Little Bear's point of view at the end of the story.

Evidence from the Text	Character's Point of View



## Show Your Thinking

Explain how the evidence from the text helped you determine Little Bear's point of view.

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With a partner, discuss how the author revealed Little Bear's changing attitude toward the settlers.





Read the following story. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.



This story is in the form of a girl's diary. As I read, I'll underline details that help me understand more about her point of view.

## Close Reading

How does Anya feel during her time at Ellis Island? **Draw a box** around any details that express or suggest her emotions.

What is Anya's attitude toward America in the last paragraph? **Circle** details that reveal what she thinks about her new home now.

Genre: Historical Fiction

## Landing at Ellis Island *by Stuart Crowley*

1 *From the diary of Anya Bulgakov, age 13:*

2 August 24, 1912: I'm not speaking to my parents. This afternoon we were standing at the railing on the ship's deck, mother and father cheering and pointing out at the island approaching across the waves. They hugged me (I didn't hug back) and told me AGAIN how our wonderful new home in America was going to be full of opportunities. I didn't speak English, I reminded them, only Russian, and I wouldn't know any of their customs. I miss my real home.

August 25, 1912: The Ellis Island Great Hall where we waited for five hours to be processed thundered with strange voices and terrifying faces. Finally, I wedged myself under my mother's arm to escape the distant cries of a child. At last, a stern medical examiner inspected each of us. We were not marked with chalk, thank goodness. That would have been a sign that we were ill and had to be deported. Relieved, we moved on to another line. Then we came to a table where the impatient man who also spoke Russian asked us question after question. He recorded the details in his ledger, and to my great relief, we were done.

3 September 9, 1912: The city is a bustling and amazing place! We've rented rooms in a building with other Russian immigrants, and my new friend Katya has promised to help me learn English. Father has secured work at a printer's shop, and mother has made my favorite *shashlyk* and *pirozhki* dishes for our new neighbors—New York City might just become a home for me after all!



Which choice is supported by Anya's behavior on the ship?

What kinds of words and phrases does Anya use to describe her experience at Ellis Island?

Trace the shifts in Anya's attitude throughout the story by looking back at the details you marked.

**Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.**

- 1** At the beginning of the story, what is the narrator's point of view about immigrating to America?

  - A** Anya is angry and upset about having to leave Russia.
  - B** Anya is anxious about having to learn English.
  - C** Anya is excited to be making a home in a new country.
  - D** Anya is grateful that there will be new opportunities for her.
- 2** What text evidence supports the idea that Anya feels afraid during her day at Ellis Island?

  - A** She and her family had to wait for five hours to be processed.
  - B** She was not marked with the chalk that meant she was ill.
  - C** She says that the Great Hall was filled with "terrifying faces."
  - D** She describes the man who asks her questions as "impatient."
- 3** Describe how Anya's attitude toward her new home changes by the end of the story. Include at least two details from the text that show how the author develops Anya's point of view.

[illegible]



Read the following excerpt from a novel. Then answer the questions that follow.

*The Japanese–American author of this story, Yoshiko Uchida, was raised to appreciate her parents’ culture and language, yet she was often excluded by her classmates as a result. Later she traveled to Japan, and her appreciation for her heritage became stronger. When writing her novels, Yoshiko always emphasized the need for readers to look past labels and appreciate people as human beings.*

## from *A Jar of Dreams*

by Yoshiko Uchida

1 That summer turned special from the day Mama got the letter that caused her strange behavior. It was on a Tuesday, one of the days Mama went to work for Mrs. Phillips to clean her house and scrub her floors. The minute I got home from school and walked into the kitchen, I knew something was wrong. Well, not wrong exactly, but strange. I felt the way I do when I’ve got one sweater button in the wrong hole or when I put my left slipper on my right foot.

2 In the first place, water was dripping from the kitchen faucet and splashing on dishes Mama had left in the sink. Ordinarily Mama never leaves the house without checking the faucets to see that they’re turned off good and tight. And she never leaves dirty dishes sitting in the sink when she goes to work.

3 But that wasn’t all. She’d left so many things scattered over the kitchen table, I couldn’t even see the yellow oilcloth cover. The Japanese newspaper was spread out on the table with a square hole in it where Mama had cut out the recipe for the day. And she hadn’t bothered to put away the scissors she’d used. There were two or three bills Mama hadn’t opened and a five–page letter from Japan that hadn’t been put back in its envelope. The table was a mess, and if I had left it that way, or my brother, Joji, we sure would have heard about it from Mama.

4 I looked at the Japanese writing in the letter, squiggling up and down the soft rice paper like a lot of skinny black spiders, and wished I could read it. But of course I couldn’t, because I don’t study very hard at Japanese Language School, and besides I’m not far enough advanced to read that kind of writing. All I could read were the numbers that said first day of the fifth month, 1935. I had a hunch, though, that whatever was in the letter was the reason Mama had gone off acting like Joji instead of her own neat self. And I couldn’t bear to wait until she got home to tell me what was in the letter.

5 I stuffed the letter in the envelope, grabbed an apple from the bin in the sunporch, and headed for Papa’s barbershop. It was a hot day, but I ran all the way to Shattuck Avenue and forgot to wait until I’d gotten to Channing Way before crossing Shattuck. That meant I’d have to walk by the Starr Laundry, which I usually avoided like a nest of cobras because of Mr. Wilbur J. Starr, the owner.

6 The reason I hate and despise Wilbur J. Starr is because he is so mean and nasty. Once when I was in the fourth grade, Joji and I walked by his laundry on the way home from Papa’s shop. Old Wilbur J. Starr was standing in the doorway of his laundry, and when Joji and I walked by minding our own business, he yelled, “Get outta here you . . . Jap kids!”

7 Joji dropped my hand and began to run. “Come on, Rinko,” he yelled. “He’s gonna git us.” And he went steaming on ahead of me, pounding hard on his fat legs.





8 I wanted to run with him, but when I heard Wilbur Starr laughing behind us, I just held up my head and said to Joji, “Pretend you never heard him.” But my knees were shaking so hard, I could barely walk home.

9 Ever since that day, I try never to walk by the Starr Laundry if I can help it, because I hated the way I felt when Wilbur Starr called me a Jap. It made me really mad, but it also made me feel as though I was no good. I felt ashamed of who I was and wished I could shrink right down and disappear into the sidewalk.

10 There are a few white girls in my class at school who made me feel that way too. They never call me “Ching Chong Chinaman” or “Jap” the way some of the boys do, but they have other ways of being mean. They talk to each other, but they talk over and around and right through me like I was a pane of glass. And that makes me feel like a big nothing. Some days I feel so left out, I hate my black hair and my Japanese face. I hate having a name like Rinko Tsujimura that nobody can pronounce or remember. And more than anything, I wish I could just be like everybody else.

*Later, Rinko finds out about the contents of the letter—her Aunt Waka in Japan is coming to visit them. During her stay, Aunt Waka teaches Rinko to appreciate her Japanese culture and traditions, to preserve her heritage, and above all, to value herself.*

Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–3 on the Answer Form to the right.

**Answer Form**

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

**Number  
Correct****3**

**1** How does Rinko’s point of view about the letter reflect the author’s perspective as a Japanese American?

- A** Like the author, Rinko knows why a letter from Japan might upset a family member.
- B** Like the author, Rinko wishes she were better at reading Japanese writing.
- C** Like the author, Rinko doesn’t study hard at a Japanese language school.
- D** Like the author, Rinko has a hunch about details in a letter.

**2** How does the author reveal Rinko’s feelings about her mother’s behavior?

- A** by telling how Rinko’s mother goes to clean house for Mrs. Phillips
- B** by telling how Rinko couldn’t wait to hear more about the letter from her mother
- C** by telling how Rinko’s mother was acting like Joji instead of her neat self
- D** by telling how Rinko’s mother checks the faucets before leaving for work



- 4** Explain how the author's culture influences the way she was able to develop Rinko's point of view. Use at least **three** details from the text to support your response.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

**✓ Self Check** Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 127.