

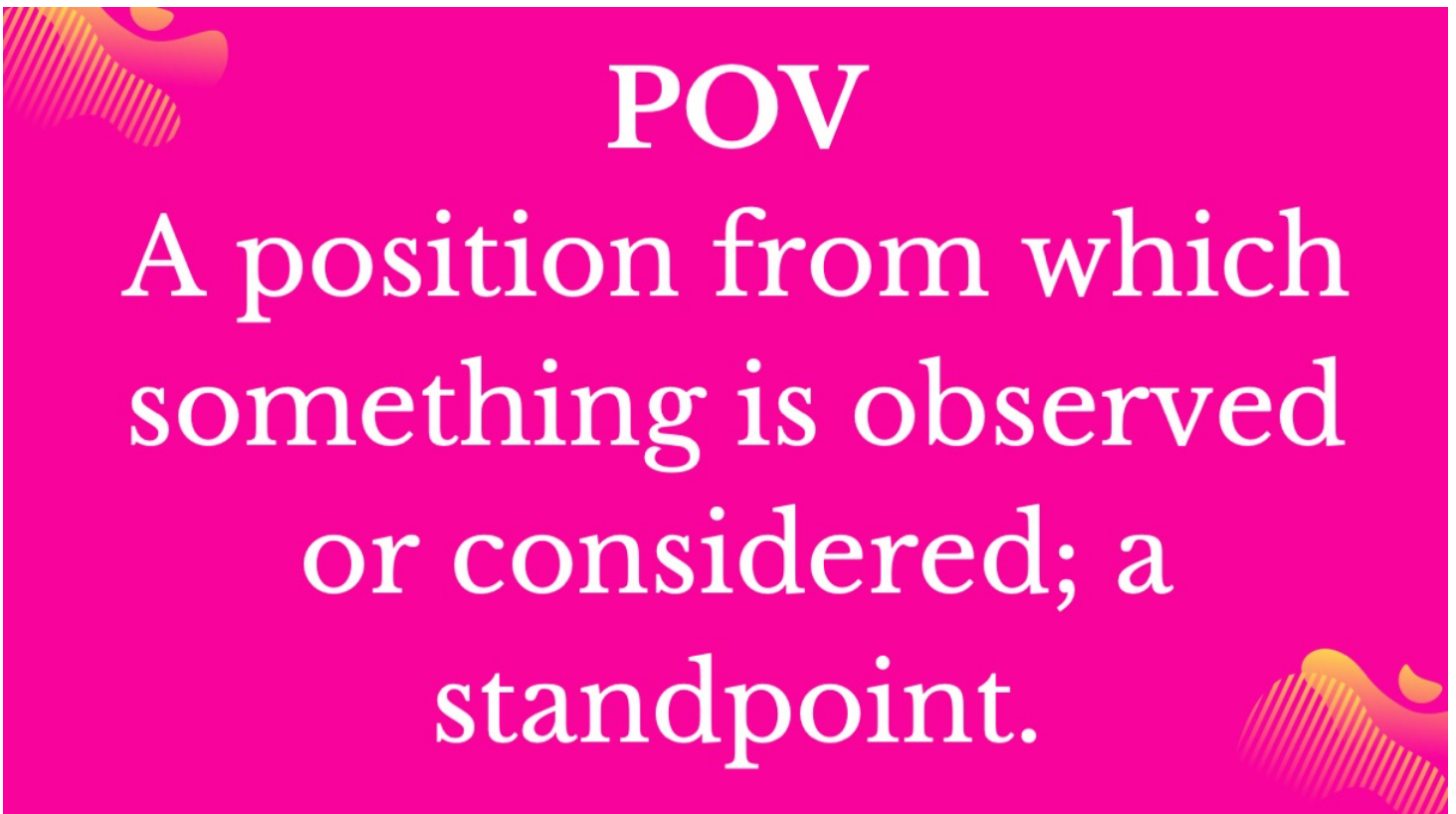


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# P.O.V. (Point of View)

 0 Comments

*Welcome to this lesson on POV (Point of View). Settle in and get ready to learn!*

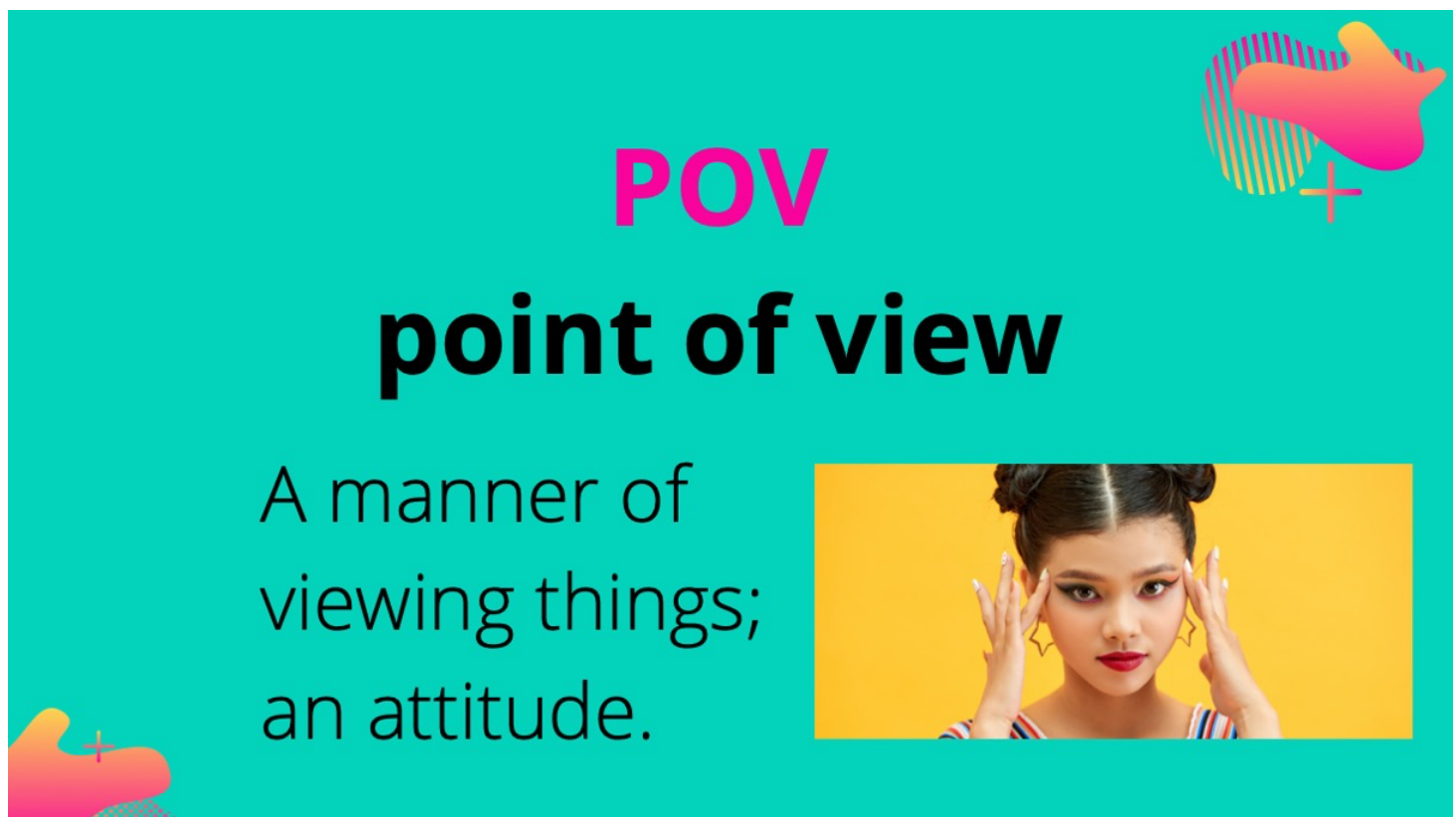


Let me start with a question: W-H-O is telling your story? Whose eyes are we seeing the story through? If you can answer these questions, chances are you have some knowledge of POV (point of view). We've mentioned it briefly in passing but now it's time to go in depth.

I see so many POV problems in the manuscripts I edit. Most of my students are simply uninformed. They've never been taught. They might have a wonderful idea for a novel. A brilliant idea, even. But that idea isn't well executed. There are POV slips all over the place.

Not sure what that means? Not sure if you're using point of view effectively? Maybe we need to go back to the beginning. From what I hear, it's a very good place to start.

## POV (Point of View) Defined



Loosely defined, "point of view" is a manner of viewing things, an attitude. It could be considered your standpoint, your outlook.

## The Importance of POV

I'm going to give you an example to explain the importance of POV. Imagine we're in a car together. I'm in the driver's seat and you're my passenger. You're a woman in labor and we're on our way to the hospital so that you can have the baby. And we're in a hurry, obviously.

Now imagine a woman and a little boy standing on a sidewalk nearby. The boy is holding a ball. At the very moment we're drawing close, the boy drops his ball and it rolls out into the street in front of the car. I slam on the brakes and veer to the right to avoid both the ball and the lady and boy. In the process, I run the car off the road and hit a light pole. The front end of my car is destroyed.

## **What's MY POV?**

Moments later a police officer arrives and asks for my version of the story. I admit that my version is mine. I own it. I saw what I saw and heard what I heard. I felt what I

felt and assumed what I assumed. I, alone, know that the car was just paid off this week. I, alone, know that my husband is probably going to kill me when he gets the news. So, I tell the officer all of this, every word, every detail. And I share with great enthusiasm, because I'm an energetic, over-the-top sort of person.

## **What's YOUR POV?**

You, on the other hand, have a different perspective. You're in labor, after all. You didn't see the woman or the boy because you were distracted, timing your contractions. And they're getting closer and closer together, upping the ante for you. You closed your eyes to the scene, completely focused on your own issue. As a result, your perspective is completely different from mine.

## **What's HER POV?**

Next, the officer turns to the mother, asking for her version of the story. She feels none of my angst over the car being paid off. Her primary concern is her son. She's feeling some guilt over the accident he caused – and is concerned about you, too, because she knows what it's like to be in labor – but her primary concern is for her little boy.

## **What's GOD'S POV?**

There's another point of view we haven't mentioned, and that's God's (the Omniscient One). He saw it all. He heard it all. He knows the motive of every heart and cares about each individual concern. What if God chose to share his version with the police officer? What would he say? Likely, He would share far more than any of us ever could. Talk about a unique angle!

Now you have a clear picture of point of view. And you can see the value of sharing

the story from so many different angles. Different viewpoints are called for so that each scene can have the most impact.

## Who's up at bat?

The fiction writer must have a basic understanding of WHO is telling the story for several reasons:

- **Clean POV** presentation will keep the reader from being confused.
- **Clean POV** will endear the character to the reader.
- **Clean POV** will help the reader see the character's motivations.

I could spend hours discussing POV (point of view) and its importance in fiction writing. This is the one area where I see the most need for improvement in young/new writers. *Who* is telling your story? Through whose eyes will the reader see

the action? This must be consistent from scene to scene. No head-hopping allowed!

## **Think about your WIP (work in progress)**

- Who is telling the story?
- Why have you chosen this character?
- Will you need to use more than one character's POV? If so, how many altogether?

So, now you see that point of view is critical. But how do you employ this technique in your writing to your best possible advantage? How do you tell your story in such a way that editors, agents and readers will connect with your characters and watch them progress?

The best way to think about point of view is to imagine a camera angle. Your POV

character is behind the camera. Every single thing in that scene comes through the lens of that character. The perceptions. The emotions. Everything.

Now, the big question: Which POV will you choose? Keep reading [the lessons ahead](#) to discover more!

**By JThompson**

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**Fiction Lessons, Point of View (POV)**

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