

IDENTIFYING NARRATIVE VOICE

Read the following extracts, and determine if they are examples of first person, third person limited, or third person omniscient narrators.

The Hunger Games
by Suzanne Collins

1 “When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim’s warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course she did. This is the day of the reaping.”

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
by J. K. Rowling

2 “The voice was growing fainter. Harry was sure it was moving away – moving upward. A mixture of fear and excitement gripped him as he stared at the dark ceiling; how could it be moving upward? Was it a phantom, to whom stone ceilings didn’t matter? “This way,” he shouted, and he began to run, up the stairs, into the entrance hall. It was no good hoping to hear anything here, the babble of talk from the Halloween feast was echoing out of the Great Hall. Harry sprinted up the marble staircase to the first floor, Ron and Hermione clattering behind him.”

The Help
by Kathryn Stockett

3 “Mae Mobley was born on a early Sunday morning in August, 1960. A church baby we like to call it. Taking care a white babies, that’s what I do, along with all the cooking and the cleaning. I done raised seventeen kids in my lifetime. I know how to get them babies to sleep, stop crying, and go in the toilet bowl before they mamas even get out a bed in the morning. But I ain’t never seen a baby yell like Mae Mobley Leefolt. First day I walk in the door, there she be, red- hot and hollering with the colic, fighting that bottle like it’s a rotten turnip. Miss Leefolt, she look terrified a her own child.”

Pride and Prejudice
by Jane Austen

4 “Mr Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.”

The Remains of the Day
by Kazuo Ishiguro

5 “Tonight, I find myself here in a guest house in the city of Salisbury. The first day of my trip is now completed, and all in all, I must say I am quite satisfied. This expedition began this morning almost an hour later than I had planned, despite my having completed my packing and loaded the Ford with all necessary items well before eight o’clock. What with Mrs Clements and the girls also gone for the week, I suppose I was very conscious of the fact that once I departed, Darlington Hall would stand empty for probably the first time this century – perhaps for the first time since the day it was built. It was an odd feeling and perhaps accounts for why I delayed my departure so long, wandering around the house many times over, checking one last time that all was in order.”

Then answer these questions in your book:

1.a) What is the narrative perspective of this extract?

1.b) What effect does this choice of narrator have?



2.a) Can you identify the narrative perspective of this extract?

2.b) Explain your choice of answer to the previous question.



3.a) What is the narrative perspective of this extract?

3.b) How is this narrator’s voice particularly distinct?

3.c) How might this piece of writing be different if it were written from a different perspective?



4.a) What can we learn about these characters from the narrator?

4.b) Would we learn these things if the author had chosen a first person narrator?



5.a) Identify the narrative perspective of this extract.

5.b) What impressions have you already formed about this narrator?

5.c) How did you form this opinion? (*hint – quote!)