

Grade 4 Playlist: Orient the Reader, Introduce a Narrator and/or Character, and Organize Events

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.A*:

- Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

Welcome

Nancy's teacher has asked the class to write a story about a fun summer trip. Last summer, Nancy went on her first fishing trip with her father and older sister. She chooses to write about the fishing trip. She then begins to write her first draft. "My dad rented a boat from the marina. My sister Nina and I baited our hooks. The breeze that blew in the air began to grow stronger. I caught my first fish that day. It was a striped bass that weighed three pounds." After reading what she had written, Nancy tried to imagine that she was the reader. She realized that the beginning of the story was not very clear. The reader would not know who was speaking, or even what was going on! She would have to revise her story to make the narrator, setting, characters, and events clearer for the reader.

Watch!

Watch this video for a review on narrators.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubNgrfTD7Mc>

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and characters.
- organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

Review

Key Terms

- To **orient** the reader means to lead them in the right direction. Writers do this by letting the reader know what is going on in the story. They also use the **point of view** from which the story is being told. The point of view shows who is telling the story.
- The **narrator** is the person telling the story.
 - Sometimes the narrator is a character in the story. If the narrator is in the story, then the story is told from the **first-person point of view**. The narrator uses the word "I."
 - If the narrator is not a character in the story, then the narrator is instead speaking from outside of the story. The story is then told from the **third-person point of view**.



- A story has **characters**, or people who are in the story. **Major characters** are the people most important to the story. People who are not that important to the story are **minor characters**.
- A story's **sequence of events** is the things that happen in the order in which they happen.

Watch!

This video gives more information about narrator's point of view and how it can be used in a story.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AnYSohfjAg

Read!

For a review on how to establish the situation and introduce narrators and characters, read the following excerpt and its accompanying explanation.

http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38025/38025-h/38025-h.htm#Page_46

This story is called "How I Learned to Ride" by Leo Tolstoy, a writer who lived in Russia in the 1800s. While reading, try to answer the following questions: What happens in this story? Who is telling the story? How are they involved in the situation? How does Tolstoy orient the reader using the situation and the narrator?

This story is told by a first-person point of view narrator. The narrator is the main character. The reader knows from the beginning that the person telling the story is a young boy. The situation is also established early. The boy is taking riding lessons for the first time. The reader knows that the rest of the story will involve the boy's riding lessons.

This story has only a few events. But each event leads to the next. The narrator begs his father to let him take riding lessons with his older brothers. His father agrees. When the boy starts riding school, the others laugh at him. But he insists that he can learn to ride even though he is small and young. He does well at first, but since he is not very experienced, he falls off his horse. Notice that the writer makes it clear to the reader that the boy is scared (and afraid of people finding out how afraid he is). The writer also makes it clear that he is proud. If the story were told from a different point of view, the writer would have to orient the reader differently to give him or her that information.

Exploring the Standard

A story must have a situation, or something that is going on. It also must have characters, a narrator, or both.

Early in the story, the writer must express to the reader what is going on. The writer must be sure that the reader can answer the following questions: Who is telling the story? Is the storyteller a character inside the story or someone from outside the story? If the reader is not oriented, he or she can easily get lost.

A story also must have a sequence of events. As the situation moves along, one event happens after another. Usually, one event will lead to another, or it will cause another event to happen. It is important that these events happen in a way that the reader can understand. Even if a story is fictional, the writer should try to make the situation believable.

