

Teaching Notes

The goal of RL.8.6 is for students to analyze how differences in point of view between readers and characters can create effects like humor or suspense. In order to accomplish this goal, students will learn to identify the point of view of the narrator and think critically about how this shapes the point of view of the reader. They will also learn to identify instances of dramatic irony in a text. Students may have a difficult time understanding how the narrative point of view shapes the reader's experience. If this is the case, pause before discussing dramatic irony, and use Activity 1 below. This teaching note also provides further instruction and additional resources to read and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Ask students to write a short description of an event that occurred in class. Have students write from a diversity of viewpoints. After they have completed this exercise, allow them to share their writing with each other. Discuss how different narrators treat the same situation differently. Ask students to consider how these different perspectives resulted in differing versions of the same story. If someone was not present for the event, for example, they would only have the information given to them by a particular narrator. Because that information changes based on the narrator, the reader's perspective would change as well.
2. In Applying the Standard, students are asked to consider how dramatic irony can be used to create a sense of suspense. Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" is the suggested reading but can be substituted for another short story at the teacher's discretion. If using this text, students will also need to consider the impact an unreliable narrator has on viewpoint of the reader (i.e., in "The Tell-Tale Heart," some information is available to the reader that is not available to the narrator). Students are also asked to make two lists using the graphic organizer. This can be best accomplished if students work together as a whole class. Invite each student to contribute one piece of information to one of the lists. This will allow the class to accumulate substantial lists, which can then be used to begin a conversation about which pieces of information are crucial and which are not. Ask students to chart the main misunderstanding of the story and answer the following: *When is the reader first alerted to this misunderstanding? When do the characters realize the mistake?* It may also be helpful to ask students to identify the most humorous or suspenseful moments in the text and use these instances to think through dramatic irony.

Additional Resources

Consider these resources when teaching RL.8.6:

- **Three Kinds of Irony:** This presentation provides a basic overview of the different types of irony: <http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/reading-worksheets/three-types-of-irony-lesson.htm>
- **Unreliable Narrators:** This 10-minute video offers an in-depth definition of *unreliable narrator*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DndmJBolHFg>
- **"The Unreliable Narrator":** Jeff Kinney, author of the *Wimpy Kid* series, talks about the main character of the series, Greg, as an unreliable narrator: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-POAG0qOXvw>



Self-Check: RL.8.6

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Stimuli ID and/or Title	ELA_G8_STIM00224
Passage Title	"The Captain's Bell"
Author	
Word Count	1018
Lexile	840L

"The Captain's Bell"

- 1 The captain's bell sat on the mantle for as long as Elsa could remember. The brass bell was nicked and notched, but the warm metal gleamed with polish. It sat beside a picture of her grandfather as he stood at the wheel of his ship. He looked over the ocean, on the lookout for any sign of trouble. If you looked closely, you could just see the bell hanging in the background behind her grandfather.
- 2 Elsa loved hearing her grandfather's sailing stories. As captain of a Navy ship, he'd had all kinds of adventures on the sea. Whenever the crew spotted danger, her grandfather would ring the bell to raise the alarm. The loud *cling-clang* of the bell could be heard over anything, despite its small size. Now it slept on the mantelpiece, its days of adventure long since past.
- 3 One day, she would have a ship of her own, going off on all kinds of adventures. She would stand at the helm of her ship, just like her grandfather, and sail out to discover new lands. She'd have a captain's bell, too, hanging right beside her as she sailed.
- 4 Until the day she would have a ship of her own, however, Elsa worked in her parents' shop. She helped her mother with customers and helped her father keep the storeroom tidy. Her favorite job, though, was delivering goods to their customers. She would load up her bicycle and cart with the packages and pretend she was sailing through uncharted waters filled with sharks and treasure. Each stop was a mysterious island, and the townsfolk were fellow sailors on the open sea. Elsa always shouted out greetings as she navigated the sleepy streets of the town.
- 5 As a future captain, Elsa understood the importance of being reliable in all kinds of weather. So, when severe thunderstorms hit their small town, Elsa knew she still needed to go out and make deliveries. It was up to her to get the groceries and supplies to their customers. They were counting on her! Besides, the storm had more or less dissolved into rain, and what kind of sailor would she be if she didn't want to get wet? So, she bundled up, covered the packages with a waterproof tarp, and headed out into the rain.
- 6 The streets were empty, the townsfolk staying inside out of the rain and the wind. At each stop, she had to shout over the constant whistle of the stormy gales. The baker met her at the door and thanked her as she handed him the bags of sugar he had ordered.



- 7 “You’d best get home, Elsa!” he said. “It looks like the storm is ready for round two. You be safe and go home quick as you can!”
- 8 “I will!” promised Elsa, who was already on her bicycle. This was her last stop, and she blew out a sigh of relief. A good captain always knew when the ship needed to tack down and take shelter. She decided to take a shortcut through the apple orchard so she could stow her cart in the barn. She’d get it tomorrow, when the rain had stopped. Elsa turned her bicycle toward the quieter part of town and pedaled for all she was worth.
- 9 The rain started coming down harder, and the wind picked up once again. Still, Elsa pumped her legs harder, going as fast as she could in the blinding weather. A fog had started up, forcing her to slow her progress to what felt like a crawl. As she neared the barn, the fog grew worse, but there was something odd about it. It almost smelled like—smoke!
- 10 Elsa screeched her bicycle to a halt in front of the old building. Sure enough, black smoke poured out of the loft windows. The old barn was used to store hay, which meant it wouldn’t take much to set the whole building alight. Elsa tried to see if any of the trees had also caught fire but couldn’t see beyond the smoke and the rain.
- 11 It must have been hit by lightning during the storm, Elsa thought. I’ve got to get some help! As she tried to think of what to do, she unhitched her cart and pulled the tarp over it. She’d travel faster without the extra weight. But how could she gather enough people in time? With all the wind, she’d have to knock on each person’s door. By the time she had alerted enough people, who knew how far the fire would spread.
- 12 A loud CLANG! interrupted her thoughts. She turned to see part of the old weather vane sliding down the roof sheeting. The metal must have made the noise when it hit the metal of the roof, cutting through the howling wind. Then, in a flash, she knew what she could do.
- 13 Elsa’s mother was still hard at work when Elsa threw open the door.
- 14 “Elsa, what on Earth—?” her mother started to ask, but Elsa was already heading out the door. Her grandfather’s bell was tucked under one arm.
- 15 “The old hay barn caught on fire!” Elsa shouted as she hopped on her bicycle again.
- 16 She flew through the streets like never before, her coat billowing out behind. She didn’t stop until she reached the town square, and then she uncovered her grandfather’s bell. Holding it above her head, she began to ring it as hard as she could.
- 17 Lights appeared along the street as people opened their windows and doors to see what the matter was. When she had their attention, Elsa stopped ringing the bell, panting.
- 18 “The barn’s on fire! We need everyone to help put it out!” she cried.



19 Ten minutes later, the entire town was at the old hay barn with buckets and shovels. It took more than an hour, but they managed to get the fire under control. The townsfolk cheered, clapping Elsa on the shoulder. She grinned, and held up the bell.

20 “I was only doing what any good captain would do,” she said.

1. How does the difference between Elsa’s point of view and that of the baker demonstrate Elsa’s determination?
 - A. The baker has confidence in Elsa, but Elsa doubts herself.
 - B. Elsa fears storms, but the baker reassures her of their insignificance.
 - C. Elsa is thankful for the baker’s kindness, but the baker lacks appreciation for Elsa.
 - D. The baker is worried about Elsa’s safety, but Elsa is concerned with the safety of others.

Item ID	ELA_G8_MCQ_WN03203
DOK level	2
Answer Choice Rationale 1	Elsa does not doubt herself in this moment.
Answer Choice Rationale 2	The text does not say Elsa particularly fears storms, and the baker encourages her to get out of the storm.
Answer Choice Rationale 3	The text says the baker is very thankful for Elsa’s delivery.
Answer Choice Rationale 4	Key. The baker encourages Elsa to be safe and go home as fast as possible, but Elsa ends up staying out in the storm to help others.

2. What makes the scene with Elsa rushing back in the house to grab the bell humorous for the audience?
 - A. The readers know that Elsa is looking for adventure, but the mother is clueless.
 - B. The readers know that Elsa is going to get the bell, but the townspeople don’t yet know.
 - C. The readers have learned to trust Elsa and her instincts, but her mother doesn’t trust her.
 - D. The readers know that Elsa is doing something important, but the mother doesn’t understand what’s happening.

Item ID	ELA_G8_MCQ_WN03204
DOK level	2
Answer Choice Rationale 1	The readers do know more about that exact moment than the mother, but the mother likely knows more about her daughter’s dreams than the readers.
Answer Choice Rationale 2	The scene is funny because the mother, not the townspeople, doesn’t know what’s happening, but the readers do.
Answer Choice Rationale 3	The readers may trust Elsa, but it’s the difference in knowledge between the readers and the mother in the story that makes the scene funny.
Answer Choice Rationale 4	Key. The scene is humorous because the readers know what Elsa is doing is important, but the mother clearly doesn’t. As Elsa rushes out, the mother is left confused.



3. Reread the following excerpt from the passage:

“Elsa screeched her bicycle to a halt in front of the old building. Sure enough, black smoke poured out of the loft windows. The old barn was used to store hay, which meant it wouldn’t take much to set the whole building alight. Elsa tried to see if any of the trees had also caught fire but couldn’t see beyond the smoke and the rain.”

How does this excerpt build suspense?

- A. Readers know what will happen in the story, but Elsa does not.
- B. Elsa knows what will happen, but she withholds information from readers.
- C. Elsa’s ability to see what is happening around her becomes limited, and so does readers’.
- D. The storm gives Elsa a perspective that she doesn’t normally have, and she shares that with readers.

Item ID	ELA_G8_MCQ_WN03205
DOK level	2
Answer Choice Rationale 1	Readers do not know what will happen in the story.
Answer Choice Rationale 2	The text does not say that Elsa knows what will happen in the story. She only suspects a few things.
Answer Choice Rationale 3	Key. Readers know only what Elsa knows in this moment. The smoke and rain prevent her from seeing what’s in front of her, which creates suspense.
Answer Choice Rationale 4	The storm limits Elsa’s perspective in this moment.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Stimuli ID and/or Title	ELA_G08_RL_SetA
Passage Title	Excerpt from <i>Cyrano de Bergerac</i>
Author	Edmond Rostand
Word Count	1403
Lexile	360

Excerpt from *Cyrano de Bergerac*

Edmond Rostand

Cyrano de Bergerac is a skilled poet and soldier who lives in Paris in the 17th century. Cyrano is in love with a beautiful woman named Roxane, but he is too insecure about his large nose to tell her his feelings. Instead, Cyrano agrees to help a fellow soldier named Christian woo Roxane. Christian is handsome but unpoetic, so Cyrano writes love letters for him to send to Roxane. At this point in the story, Christian decides to speak to Roxane without Cyrano’s help.



Scene 3.IV.

Cyrano, Christian.

CYRANO:

1 I know all that is needful. Here's occasion
For you to deck yourself with glory. Come,
Lose no time; put away those sulky looks,
Come to your house with me, I'll teach you. . .

CHRISTIAN:

2 No!

CYRANO:

3 Why?

CHRISTIAN:

4 I will wait for Roxane here.

CYRANO:

5 How? Crazy?
Come quick with me and learn. . .

CHRISTIAN:

6 No, no! I say.
I am weary of these borrowed letters,
--Borrowed love-makings! Thus to act a part,
And tremble all the time!--'Twas well enough
At the beginning!--Now I know she loves!
I fear no longer!--I will speak myself.

CYRANO:

7 Mercy!

CHRISTIAN:

8 And how know you I cannot speak?--
I am not such a fool when all is said!
I've by your lessons profited. You'll see



I shall know how to speak alone! The devil!
I know at least to clasp her in my arms!
(Seeing Roxane come out from Clomire's house):
--It is she! Cyrano, no!--Leave me not!

CYRANO (bowing):

9 Speak for yourself, my friend, and take your chance.

(He disappears behind the garden wall.)

Scene 3.V.

Christian, Roxane, the duenna.

ROXANE (coming out of Clomire's house, with a company of friends, whom she leaves. Bows and good-byes):

1 Barthenoide!--Alcandre!--Gremione!--

THE DUENNA (bitterly disappointed):

2 We've missed the speech upon the Tender Passion!

(Goes into Roxane's house.)

ROXANE (still bowing):

3 Urimedonte--adieu!

(All bow to Roxane and to each other, and then separate, going up different streets. Roxane suddenly seeing Christian):

4 You!

(She goes to him):
Evening falls.

5 Let's sit. Speak on. I listen.

CHRISTIAN (sits by her on the bench. A silence):

6 Oh! I love you!

ROXANE (shutting her eyes):

7 Ay, speak to me of love.

CHRISTIAN:

8 I love thee!



ROXANE:

9 That's
 The theme! But vary it.

CHRISTIAN:

10 I. . .

ROXANE:

11 Vary it!

CHRISTIAN:

12 I love you so!

ROXANE:

13 Oh! without doubt!--and then?. . .

CHRISTIAN:

14 And then--I should be--oh!--so glad--so glad
 If you would love me!--Roxane, tell me so!

ROXANE (with a little grimace):

15 I hoped for cream,--you give me gruel! Say
 How love possesses you?

CHRISTIAN:

16 Oh utterly!

ROXANE:

17 Come, come!. . .unknot those tangled sentiments!

CHRISTIAN:

18 Your throat I'd kiss it!

ROXANE:

19 Christian!

CHRISTIAN:

20 I love thee!



ROXANE (half-rising):

21 Again!

CHRISTIAN (eagerly, detaining her):

22 No, no! I love thee not!

ROXANE (reseating herself):

23 'Tis well!

CHRISTIAN:

24 But I adore thee!

ROXANE (rising, and going further off):

25 Oh!

CHRISTIAN:

26 I am grown stupid!

ROXANE (dryly):

27 And that displeases me, almost as much
As 'twould displease me if you grew ill-favored.

CHRISTIAN:

28 But. . .

ROXANE:

29 Rally your poor eloquence that's flown!

CHRISTIAN:

30 I. . .

ROXANE:

31 Yes, you love me, that I know. Adieu.
(She goes toward her house.)

CHRISTIAN:

32 Oh, go not yet! I'd tell you--



ROXANE (opening the door):

33 You adore me?
 I've heard it very oft. No!--Go away!

CHRISTIAN:

34 But I would fain. . .
 (She shuts the door in his face.)

CYRANO (who has re-entered unseen):

35 I' faith! It is successful!

Scene 3.VI.

1 Christian, Cyrano, two pages.

CHRISTIAN:

2 Come to my aid!

CYRANO:

3 Not I!

CHRISTIAN:

4 But I shall die,
 Unless at once I win back her fair favor.

CYRANO:

5 And how can I, at once, i' th' devil's name,
 Lesson you in. . .

CHRISTIAN (seizing his arm):

6 Oh, she is there!
 (The window of the balcony is now lighted up.)

CYRANO (moved):

7 Her window!

CHRISTIAN:

8 Oh! I shall die!



CYRANO:

9 Speak lower!

CHRISTIAN (in a whisper):

10 I shall die!

CYRANO:

11 The night is dark. . .

CHRISTIAN:

12 Well!

CYRANO:

13 All can be repaired.
 Although you merit not. Stand there, poor wretch!
 Fronting the balcony! I'll go beneath
 And prompt your words to you. . .

CHRISTIAN:

14 But. . .

CYRANO:

15 Hold your tongue!

THE PAGES (reappearing at back--to Cyrano):

16 Ho!

CYRANO:

17 Hush!
 (He signs to them to speak softly.)

FIRST PAGE (in a low voice):

18 We've played the serenade you bade
 To Montfleury!



CYRANO (quickly, in a low voice):

19 Go! lurk in ambush there,
 One at this street corner, and one at that;
 And if a passer-by should here intrude,
 Play you a tune!

SECOND PAGE:

20 What tune, Sir Gassendist?

CYRANO:

21 Gay, if a woman comes,--for a man, sad!
 (The pages disappear, one at each street corner. To Christian):
 Call her!

CHRISTIAN:

22 Roxane!

CYRANO (picking up stones and throwing them at the window):

23 Some pebbles! wait awhile!

ROXANE (half-opening the casement):

24 Who calls me?

CHRISTIAN:

25 I!

ROXANE:

26 Who's that?

CHRISTIAN:

27 Christian!

ROXANE (disdainfully):

28 Oh! You?

CHRISTIAN:

29 I would speak with you.



CYRANO (under the balcony--to Christian):

30 Good. Speak soft and low.

ROXANE:

31 No, you speak stupidly!

CHRISTIAN:

32 Oh, pity me!

ROXANE:

33 No! you love me no more!

CHRISTIAN (prompted by Cyrano):

34 You say--Great Heaven!
 I love no more?--when--I--love more and more!

ROXANE (who was about to shut the casement, pausing):

35 Hold! 'tis a trifle better! ay, a trifle!

CHRISTIAN (same play):

36 Love grew apace, rocked by the anxious beating. . .
 Of this poor heart, which the cruel wanton boy. . .
 Took for a cradle!

ROXANE (coming out on to the balcony):

37 That is better! But
 An if you deem that Cupid be so cruel
 You should have stifled baby-love in's cradle!

CHRISTIAN (same play):

38 Ah, Madame, I assayed, but all in vain
 This. . .new-born babe is a young. . .Hercules!

ROXANE:

39 Still better!

CHRISTIAN (same play):

40 Thus he strangled in my heart
 The. . .serpents twain, of. . .Pride. . .and Doubt!



ROXANE (leaning over the balcony):

- 41 Well said!
--But why so faltering? Has mental palsy
Seized on your faculty imaginative?

CYRANO (drawing Christian under the balcony, and slipping into his place):

- 42 Give place! This waxes critical!. . .

ROXANE:

- 43 To-day. . .
Your words are hesitating.

CYRANO (imitating Christian--in a whisper):

- 44 Night has come. . .
In the dusk they grope their way to find your ear.

ROXANE:

- 45 But my words find no such impediment.

CYRANO:

- 46 They find their way at once? Small wonder that!
For 'tis within my heart they find their home;
Bethink how large my heart, how small your ear!
And,--from fair heights descending, words fall fast,
But mine must mount, Madame, and that takes time!

ROXANE:

- 47 Meseems that your last words have learned to climb.

CYRANO:

- 48 With practice such gymnastic grows less hard!

ROXANE:

- 49 In truth, I seem to speak from distant heights!

CYRANO:

- 50 True, far above; at such a height 'twere death
If a hard word from you fell on my heart.



ROXANE (moving):

51 I will come down. . .

CYRANO (hastily):

52 No!

ROXANE (showing him the bench under the balcony):

53 Mount then on the bench!

CYRANO (starting back alarmed):

54 No!

ROXANE:

55 How, you will not?

CYRANO (more and more moved):

56 Stay awhile! 'Tis sweet,. . .
The rare occasion, when our hearts can speak
Our selves unseen, unseeing!

ROXANE:

57 Why—unseen?

CYRANO:

58 Ay, it is sweet! Half hidden,--half revealed--
You see the dark folds of my shrouding cloak,
And I, the glimmering whiteness of your dress:
I but a shadow--you a radiance fair!
Know you what such a moment holds for me?
If ever I were eloquent. . .

ROXANE:

59 You were!

CYRANO:

60 Yet never till to-night my speech has sprung
Straight from my heart as now it springs.



ROXANE:

61 Why not?

CYRANO:

62 Till now I spoke haphazard. . .

ROXANE:

63 What?

CYRANO:

64 Your eyes
 Have beams that turn men dizzy!--But to-night
 Methinks I shall find speech for the first time!

ROXANE:

65 'Tis true, your voice rings with a tone that's new.

CYRANO (coming nearer, passionately):

66 Ay, a new tone! In the tender, sheltering dusk
 I dare to be myself for once,--at last!
 (He stops, falters):
 What say I? I know not!--Oh, pardon me--
 It thrills me,--'tis so sweet, so novel. . .

ROXANE:

67 How?
 So novel?

CYRANO (off his balance, trying to find the thread of his sentence):

68 Ay,--to be at last sincere;
 Till now, my chilled heart, fearing to be mocked. . .

ROXANE:

69 Mocked, and for what?



CYRANO:

70 For its mad beating!--Ay,
My heart has clothed itself with witty words,
To shroud itself from curious eyes:--impelled
At times to aim at a star, I stay my hand,
And, fearing ridicule,--cull a wild flower!

ROXANE:

71 A wild flower's sweet.

CYRANO:

72 Ay, but to-night--the star!

ROXANE:

73 Oh! never have you spoken thus before!

4. Which of the following correctly complete each sentence? Fill in the blanks with the correct answer choice from those provided in parentheses.

The passage contains dramatic irony when _____ (Roxane falls in love with Christian, Roxane realizes Christian is handsome, Roxane does not recognize Christian on the street, Roxane is disappointed that Christian is not poetic).

This is an example of dramatic irony because the audience knows that _____ (Christian is studying poetry, Christian does not love Roxane, Christian is hiding his appearance, Christian did not write the letters).

Item ID	ELA_RL.8.6_DRD_Q6
DOK level	2
Key/correct answer	The answers that correctly complete the sentences are the following: "4 Roxane is disappointed that Christian is not poetic" and "Christian did not write the letters." Roxane expects Christian to be poetic because he has been giving her poetic letters. This is an example of dramatic irony because the audience knows that Cyrano actually wrote the letters instead of Christian.



5. Which statements indicate the dramatic irony in the passage by identifying what Roxane believes and what the audience knows?
- A. Christian loves Roxane.
 - B. Christian wants to be wealthy.
 - C. Christian is outside Roxane's window.
 - D. Roxane is attracted to Cyrano.
 - E. Roxane is unhappy with Cyrano.
 - F. Roxane is speaking with Cyrano.

Item ID	ELA_RL.8.6_DDP_Q7
DOK level	2
Key/correct answer	What the character believes is that "Christian is outside Roxane's window." What the audience knows is that "Roxane is speaking with Cyrano." The passage creates dramatic irony because Roxane believes Christian is alone outside her window. However, the audience knows that Roxane is actually speaking with Cyrano instead of Christian.

