

Unit 3 Acts of Kindness

Part I Narration (Objective Narratives)

Activity 1 Practicing points of view

☞ **Identify the point of view in the following passages and explain why it is suitable for the narrative. The first three passages are selected from *Contemporary College English, Intensive Reading* (Second Edition).**

1. The story is narrated from an objective third-person point of view. The narrator merely tells what he observes and does not examine the mental processes of anyone involved.
2. The first-person point of view is used in this passage, in which the narrator is a participant in the action described. This point of view allows the narrator to freely express his opinions and feelings about the student.
3. The writer tells the story in the limited third-person point of view, in which an unknown narrator describes what happened and reports the man's thoughts and feelings.
4. The second-person point of view. The writer is giving direct instructions to job applicants.

☞ **Which point(s) of view do you think is (are) appropriate for each of the following topics? State your reason(s).**

1. Either the first-person or the third-person point of view is appropriate for a short story.
2. Only the first-person point of view is appropriate for journal/diary entries.
3. The first-person point of view, for this point of view allows writers to easily express their joy and excitement on such an occasion.
4. The objective third-person point of view. The primary task of the writer of history books is to faithfully present historical events.
5. The second-person point of view, which allows the writer to tell the user how to use the material.
6. The second-person point of view, which allows the writer to give instructions.
7. The objective third-person point of view, because witnesses are supposed to report, faithfully and impartially, what they have seen without offering interpretation and commentary, which this point of view does not allow.
8. The first-person point of view, which allows the expression of attitudes and feelings, thus making the narrative personal and vivid. The third-person point of view is also appropriate.

9. Both the first-person and the third-person points of view are possible. The incident can be narrated by either a first-person narrator who is an observer or a participant, or a third-person narrator who enters the mental processes of one or more of the people involved. Both points of view allow interpretation and commentary.
10. Both the first-person and the third-person points of view can be used for the same reasons as stated for the previous topic.



Correct the shifts in the points of view in the following sentences and short passages.

1. During the border crisis, both countries refused to change **their** aggressive attitudes. / During the border crisis, neither country agreed to change its aggressive attitude.
2. If a person finds a wallet containing money and an ID card, what do you think **he/she** should do? / If you find a wallet containing money and an ID card, what do you think **you** should do?
3. Every time I visit the Forbidden City in Beijing, **I** will discover new attractions. / Every time you visit the Forbidden City in Beijing, **you** will discover new attractions.
4. When you go to Paris, **you** should visit the Louvre and Notre-Dame Cathedral. / When **a** person goes to Paris, **he or she** should visit the Louvre and Notre-Dame Cathedral.
5. To keep in good shape, one must not only exercise but also watch **his/her** diet. / To keep in good shape, **we** must not only exercise but also watch **our** diet.
6. As you enter the garden, **you** will find an exquisite huge rock formation on **your** left. / As one enters the garden, **one** will find an exquisite huge rock formation on **one's** left.
7. Professional writers report that one of the joys of **their** craft is the repeated opportunity to explore new fields.
8. Creative thinking can expand our awareness and open the door to new points of view. Often it is capable of generating many points of view on an issue or many answers to a question before **we** begin thinking critically about them.
9. Budgeting is really a type of planning. And, like other forms of planning, it creates freedom. When you have a budget and stick to it, you can relax. You are confident. **You** don't have to worry about whether **you** can pay your bills. Budgeting is easy because it is mechanical once you get started. The idea is to project how much money is coming in and how much is going out.
10. When you write, you not only gather information; you also assess it. You sift through the data, play with it, and sort it out. You look for relationships among facts and choose ideas that are useful to **you**. Through writing, **you** turn data into insight.

Activity 2 Readings on the topic

(1)

Night Watch

Questions to think about

1. Because the marine knew the patient wanted to see his son and took the marine to be his son. He didn't want to disappoint a dying man, so he stayed on and played the part of the son.
2. He performed an act of kindness, a noble deed.
3. The man must have felt happy and contented to be with "his son" in the last few hours of his life. Otherwise, he would have left the world with deep regret.
4. The objective point of view, for the narrator just reports what happened without saying anything about the thoughts and feelings of anyone involved.
5. It conveys the thesis of the narrative.
6. The writer focuses on the primary scene—how the marine played the role of the dying man's son. He did exactly what the old man expected from his son in the last hours of his life. This is far more powerful than dramatizing the marine's thoughts and feelings.

(2)

The Man in the Water

Questions to think about

1. The first two paragraphs form the introduction of the essay. In this part, the writer, Roger Rosenblatt, begins with a brief account of the air disaster and ends with the thesis statement of the essay in the last sentence of the second paragraph: "And on that same afternoon, human nature—groping and struggling—rose to the occasion."
2. In the next six paragraphs, Rosenblatt goes on to describe and analyze the deeds of four heroes—what they did to rescue the survivors of the air crash struggling in the freezing cold river.
3. Two of them were a police helicopter team who risked their own lives each time they lowered a rope and ring for a survivor. Another hero jumped into the water and dragged an injured survivor to shore. The fourth hero himself, the man first known as "the man in the water" was one of the survivors. Each time a lifeline and flotation ring was dropped to him, he passed it to another survivor. When the helicopter came for him again, he had gone under.
4. The writer wants to show that the man in the water was an ordinary person, doing exactly the

things people usually do on a flight. In the water, he knew what would happen to him if he continued to pass the rope and ring to others, but he was willing to do so. Rosenblatt wants to say that every human being is capable of doing what he or she has never thought himself/herself able to do when circumstances require them to challenge death.

5. Rosenblatt argues that in this struggle between man and nature, the man in the water challenged death, and his act of kindness prevented nature from taking the lives of the other five survivors, thus convincingly demonstrating the strength of human nature.

In the last paragraph, he reiterates his thesis in a more emphatic way and points out that in the struggle between man and nature, the man in the water represents human nature at its best.

6. Yes, this point of view allows him to imagine the man's behavior on his flight and his thoughts and feelings when he was struggling in the water to live and when he passed the rope and ring to other survivors. Also, using this point of view, he could reflect on the fight between man and nature, the implications of the selflessness of the man in the water, and the power of human nature.

(3)

All in a Day's Work

Questions to think about

1. The first two paragraphs form the introduction. The first paragraph is a detailed description of the patient—a rather disgustingly dirty man nobody wants to have to treat. In the second paragraph, the nurses' unspoken message was communicated to the head nurse: that they all hoped that she would not put them in charge of this patient. These paragraphs provide the background against which the head nurse performed the unusual act of kindness.
2. He was very dirty and unhealthily fat, definitely a person that people would try to avoid.
3. To do what others would not think of doing, what is regarded as impossible, and take charge of those that others would not like to deal with. This quality enhances the human spirit.
4. She took charge of this patient when no other nurse wanted to. What's more, she tenderly bathed him, rubbed his back and put lotion and powder on his skin. She hummed and talked to the man to ease his fear and embarrassment. This shows that she did everything for the man not only because it was her job as a nurse, but more importantly, out of love and compassion for a fellow human being.
5. The third-person point of view. It enables the narrator to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the head nurse and those of her colleagues.


Activity 3 Readings written by your peers

Questions to think about

1. The first follows a two-paragraph pattern: The first paragraph provides background information and describes the noble deed, and the second states the thesis. The second essay uses a three-paragraph pattern: The first supplies background information, the second describes the noble deed, and the third conveys the thesis.
2. The first adopts the objective third-person point of view without presenting anybody's thoughts and feelings; the second uses the limited third-person point of view describing one person's thoughts and feelings.
3. Yes. The point of the first narrative is that to protect people's property, a police officer must crack down on criminal acts; the point of the second is that a person should not take what does not belong to him/her.
4. Answers vary.
5. Answers vary.

Part II Effective Sentences (Emphasis)

Activity 4 Practicing making sentences emphatic

 **Underline the part(s) of each sentence or set of sentences creating emphasis and analyze how emphasis is achieved.**

1. Certainly my own life, my husband's life and my children's lives are diminished by their absence. (repetition of key words)
2. Inside the carton was a push-button unit fastened to a small wooden box. (inversion)
3. You'll probably understand better when you are a mother yourself. (reflexive pronoun)
4. We have here no vast mountain ranges, no boundless plains, no miles of forest, and are deprived of the grandeur that may accompany these things. (repetition of key words)
5. This is where I got my first kiss, smoked my first cigarette, and buried my first pet. (repetition of key words)
6. With variety goes surprise. (inversion)
7. But before you have reached them you have already been surprised by a bit of marshland... (main idea in the end position)
8. The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naive forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget. (repetition of key words)

9. The trees and hedges, the grass and wild flowers in the foreground, all suggest that Nature has not been forced into obedience. (main idea at the beginning)
10. Vingo sat there stunned, looking at the oak tree. It was covered with yellow handkerchiefs, twenty of them, thirty of them, fifty of them, maybe hundreds, a tree that stood like a banner of welcome blowing and billowing in the wind, turned into a gorgeous yellow blur by the passing bus. (repetition of key words)

☞ **Read the following paragraphs and underline places where sentences have been made emphatic.**

1. But the cell phone has changed our sense of place more than faxes and computers and e-mail because of its ability to intrude into every moment in every possible place. When you walk along the street and talk on a cell phone, you are not on the street sharing the communal experience of urban life. You are in some other place—some place at the other end of your phone conversation. You are there, but you are not there. It reminds me of the title of Lillian Ross's memoir of her life with William Shawn, *Here but Not Here*. Now that is increasingly true of almost every person on almost every street in almost every city. You are either on the phone or carrying one, and the moment it rings you will be transported out of real space into a virtual realm. (repetition)
2. The Internet can make you smarter, but it can't make you smart. It can extend your reach, but it will never tell you what to say at a P.T.A. meeting. These fundamentals cannot be downloaded. You can only upload them, the old-fashioned way, one by one in places like Room 13 at St. Louis Park High. I only regret that I didn't write this column when the woman who taught me all that was still alive. (passive voice emphasizing action)
3. I grew up in a small suburb of Minneapolis, and Hattie was the legendary journalism teacher at St. Louis Park High School, Room 313. I took her intro to journalism course in 10th grade, back in 1969, and have never needed, or taken another course in journalism since. She was that good. (occasional short sentence)

☞ **Use the method indicated in brackets to make each of the following sentences emphatic. You may have to delete or add words.**

1. Laughing relaxes and energizes the whole body.
2. He likes reading so much that the sight of a single book makes him smile.
3. It is completely safe and should be practiced as much and as often as possible.
4. I will always remember their efforts.
5. The manager favors a reduction in prices.

6. Beyond our vegetable garden is situated a combination blacksmith and carpenter shop.
7. The book is dedicated to all those who have made its publication possible.
8. While still at college, he discovered his calling: to diagnose infectious diseases, to find ways of curing people with infectious diseases, and to bring the lifesaving knowledge of modern medicine to the disadvantaged.
9. When built, the palace and its grounds were more extensive than the city itself.
10. After setting up the table, slicing the vegetables, preparing the salad, and putting the steak into the oven, I was ready to have a rest before my guest arrived. Then the phone rang.

Activity 5 Readings on the topic

(1)

Leading the Charge

Questions to think about

1. It provides background information about the heroic deed the captain performed.
2. When other fire trucks were waiting a block away, he drove his truck through the intense heat, reached the burning refinery and began to fight the fire. He performed this act of bravery unintentionally. The brakes on his truck were not working properly, so he didn't manage to join the other trucks a block away but stopped right in front of the burning refinery instead.
3. He asked jokingly for a new set of brakes. His remark showed that he didn't want to pretend that he performed the act of bravery intentionally.
4. He was an honest person. He didn't want to pretend to be a hero and take advantage of the mayor's offer to reward him. He deserves our respect.
5. The objective point of view. The narrator only reports what happened and does not describe anyone's thoughts and feelings.
6. In the first paragraph, Wickett chiefly uses the subject and verb to express the important ideas, e.g. the first two sentences. In the first sentence of the second paragraph, he uses subject-verb inversion to emphasize the most important idea "a fire truck racing down the street," which occupies the end position in the sentence.

Heroes: Rescue in the Water

Questions to think about

1. I think the narrator, Jason Kersten, did not witness the rescue. He probably interviewed the fisherman and the three college students shortly after the event. The report seems to be based on what he heard from the four people involved. He adopts a limited third-person point of view
2. The first four paragraphs form the introduction, which provides detailed information about the fisherman, and about the setting of the event.
3. He primarily has the narrator recount the events. He also frequently quotes the words of McClure or those of the girls.
4. The author chiefly uses the subjects and main verbs to state the key actors (subjects) and actions. In the first sentence of the last paragraph, however, he uses the emphatic *it* to place emphasis on “when they met McClure several evenings later”.
5. They are not only ready to help and brave, they are also smart enough to know that they would be able to save the drowning man only by their combined efforts. They are capable of sizing up the situation and realizing that any one of them wouldn’t be able to do the job alone.
6. The three college students’ efforts to save the 67-year-old drowning angler are well worthwhile not only for the rescued and his family, but for themselves, because they feel a strong sense of pride for what they have done. The point the writer makes is implied in the words of one of the girls in the last paragraph.

Activity 6 Readings written by your peers

Questions to think about

1. They both use the objective third-person point of view.
2. The two writers both chiefly use the subjects and verbs of sentences to state main actors and actions.