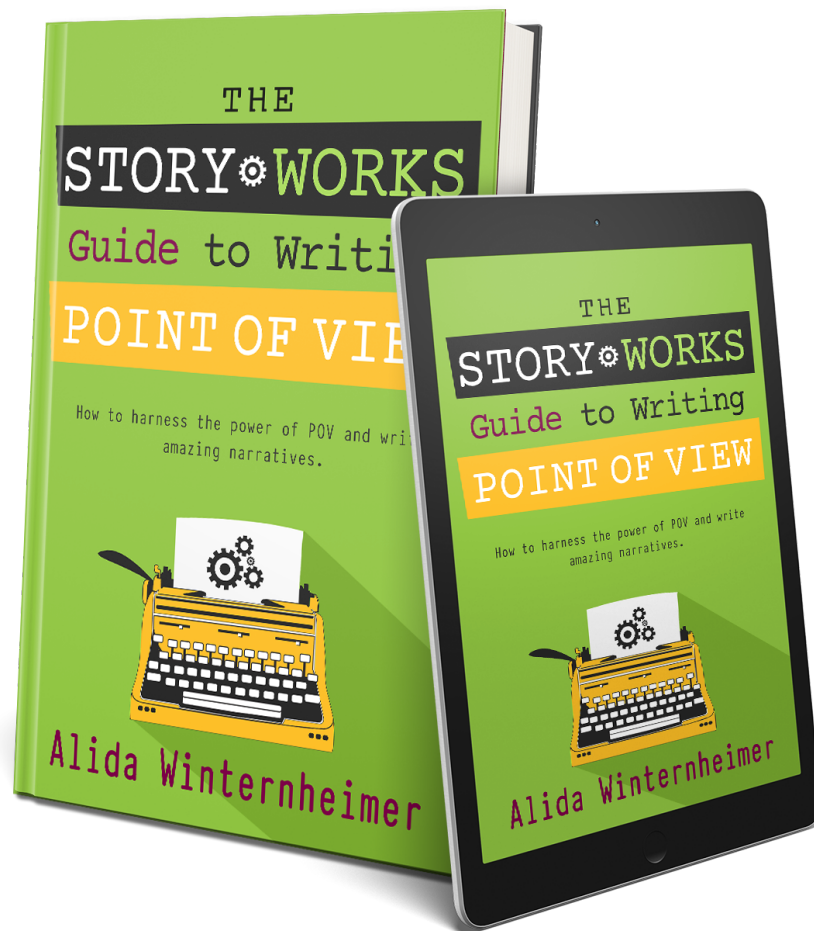


Thank you for joining Story Works!



May you always choose the best POV character for each scene!

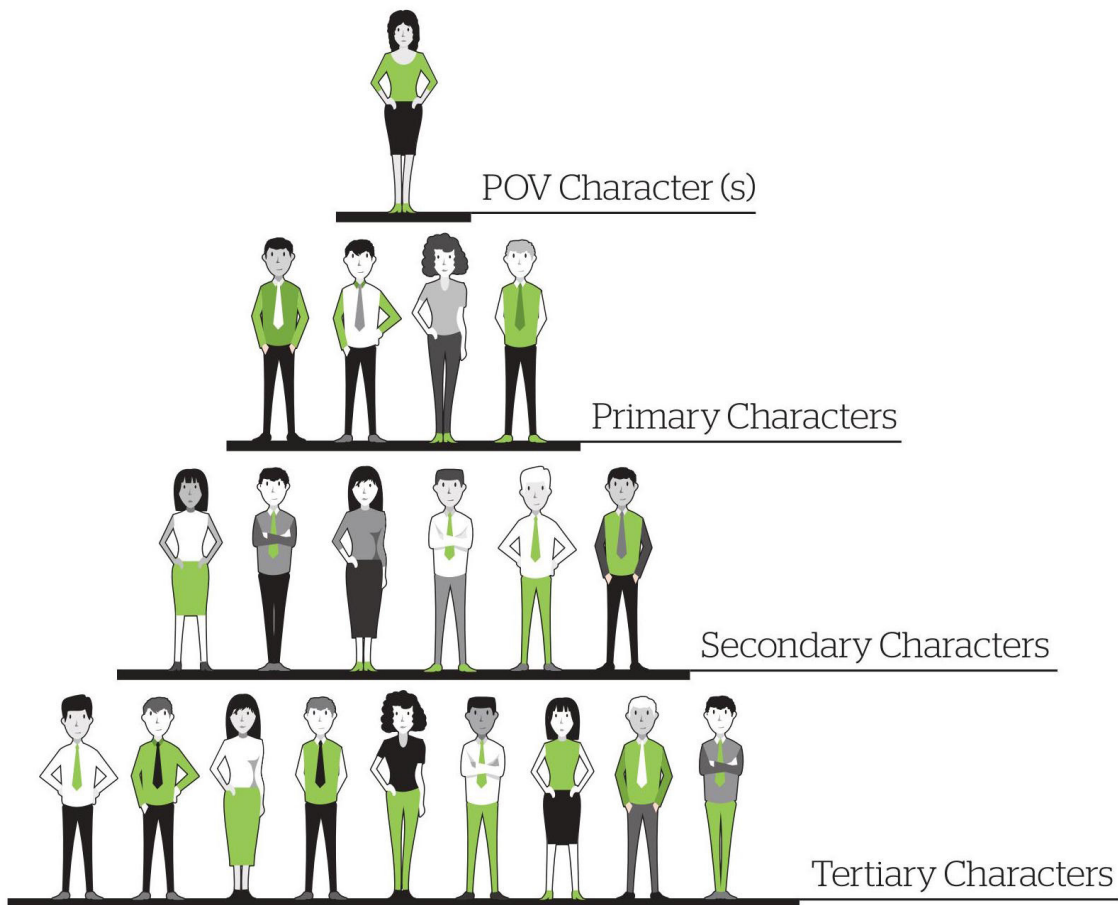
Choose the RIGHT Point of View Character

**How do you know your POV character is going to
help you create the most compelling,
dynamic, unforgettable scene possible?**

**If you have multiple POV characters, you need to
use them wisely.**

Every crown must be earned!

How Many POV Characters Can Dance on the Head of Your Pyramid?



Go through the following worksheet and you'll soon know whose perspective to use in each scene and why.

When You Gotta Have 'Em

When you have multiple point of view characters in a story, you need a way to make sure you're putting the right character into the right scene every time. Otherwise, you're going to write bland when you need to write compelling, fizz when you need pop, and meh when you need wow!

To fix this problem, create a character hierarchy as a reference that you can use while you write by filling out this worksheet.

You can save this and print a new worksheet for every story you write with multiple point of view characters.

Even if you're writing a single point of view story, doing this exercise will help you see what you need to bring to every scene to keep the stakes high for your protagonist and the action compelling for your reader.

Remember, stakes and action are relative to each story. In one story, the stakes might be life and death, the action bombs dropping on a town. In another story, the stakes might be a broken heart, the action a man opening a letter from his lover.



Part 1: Character Hierarchy

In this part of the exercise, you'll make a roll call for your cast of point of view characters, then assign them each a rank in the hierarchy.

Example

POV Character #3

Name: Master Morlan

Role in story/special skills: Master Sorcerer, mentor to Casey. Can turn into anything in the bird realm, was a champion swordsman in his youth, brews his own ale as a hobby. ____

How invested in this character are readers at this point in the story? Readers like Morlan, because he's a tough old man with a soft spot that is endearing, and because he really cares about Casey. He is Casey's ally when no one else is, yet he manages to keep enough distance to let Casey make his own mistakes and fight his own battles. _____

What is this character's arc? Morlan appears to be invincible and he believes it of himself, always the champion of others, never the underdog, never needing help. He is killed at the end of book 2, but will reappear in book 5, greatly weakened and traumatized from time in a hellish underworld. At this point, Casey will have grown up enough for a role reversal, and Casey will become Morlan's ally and protector when everyone else has given him up for lost. Morlan will learn to accept his weakness and the help of a friend. _____

Now that you've seen the kind of information you need to consider when creating your character hierarchy, fill out the worksheet for each of your point of view characters.

Once you've filled out the information necessary, assign each character a rank, based on how close to the role of protagonist they are. In the example above, Casey would be ranked #1 as the hero of the journey. Casey's love interest or sidekick might be #2. While Morlan, his mentor, is #3.

Print as many of these pages as you need for your cast of characters.

Once you've filled out this information and assigned each character a rank, move on part 2.

POV Character #_____

Name: _____

Role in story/special skills: _____

How invested in this character are readers at this point in the story? _____

What is this character's arc? _____

POV Character #_____

Name: _____

Role in story/special skills:

How invested in this character are readers at this point in the story? _____

What is this character's arc? _____

Part 2: Choosing the RIGHT POV Character for Your Scene

Answer these questions for any scene that will involve multiple POV characters when you aren't immediately certain which perspective will work best.

Example

1. What is the scene about? __Morlan and Casey are in a battle with the dark sorcerer for control of the Goddess Gemstone. At the peak of the battle, Casey manages to get hold of the gemstone and shouts to Morlan, victorious, that he's got it. But before he can get the words out, the dark sorcerer blasts Morlan with a magic vortex that swallows up Morlan and then the black vortex disappears. Casey has to flee or lose the gemstone to the dark sorcerer, too. _____

2. Which of my POV characters will be involved in this scene? What are the different traits each character brings to the scene? _____ Casey is the protagonist and readers are deeply invested in his journey. He will bring some skill, good luck, and gumption to the scene, as well as fear, because he's in over his head and only the presence of Morlan at his side gives him confidence. Morlan brings his expertise and experience. This isn't his first battle with the dark sorcerer. His plan is to risk himself, trusting that the dark sorcerer will not be able to resist taking him down, even at the cost of Casey getting away with the gemstone. __

3. How can you use your point of view character to set up intrigue? Create tension?

Establish certain facts? Or obscure certain facts? _____ If I use Morlan's POV, the reader will see him luring the dark sorcerer away from Casey and will probably figure out that he's sacrificing himself, which will tug at the heartstrings as she anticipates Morlan's demise. If I use Casey's POV, we'll have the tension of his fear and inexperience as he goes up against the dark sorcerer, his reliance on Morlan will be clear, and his shock when Morlan disappears will hit the reader hard, since neither he nor the reader will see it coming. Morlan is, after all, invincible. __

4. Which of them has the most to gain or lose in this scene? Which point of view character best advances the story in the direction you need it to go? ____ Going into it, they both stand to lose their lives and the gemstone. At the outcome, Morlan will lose his life. Casey will lose his mentor and find himself alone on his journey. This is Casey's journey and his loss is the greater, because it's the repercussions to him that I'll explore in the next chapter. _____

5. How does the scene change with the point of view character? ____ If I tell the scene in Morlan's perspective, the reader will experience the fight with a master who is well-matched to his foe and will see that he is baiting the dark sorcerer in order to facilitate the mission, which will set the reader up for seeing the sacrifice coming. If I use Casey's perspective the reader will be with the junior sorcerer and that will heighten the sense of danger and anxiety over the outcome. When Casey gets the gemstone, the reader will feel his elation momentarily, then his horror when Morlan is vanquished by the dark sorcerer.

6. Which perspective will most compel the reader to feel deeply and keep reading? Why? ____ Casey's perspective will be the most compelling, because his shock at Morlan's disappearance and his grief over his loss will most impact the reader at the scene's climax. _

Print and fill out the following worksheet for each scene in which you need to assess the right POV character's perspective to deliver the action to the reader.

1. What is the scene about?

2. Which of my POV characters will be involved in this scene? What are the different traits each character brings to the scene?

3. How can you use your point of view character to set up intrigue? Create tension? Establish certain facts? Or obscure certain facts?

4. Which of them has the most to gain or lose in this scene? Which point of view character best advances the story in the direction you need it to go?

5. How does the scene change with the point of view character?

6. Which perspective will most compel the reader to feel deeply and keep reading? Why?



Alida Winterheimer
is your writing coach
at Word Essential.
She writes several
genres, from fairy tale
to literary, and edits
all genres.

Her publications include:

- The Story Works Guide to Writing Fiction Series
- The Skoghall Mystery Series
- A Stone's Throw
- lots of short stories, some plays, and two master's theses.

Find her at www.WordEssential.com