Grade 7: Reading Benchmark

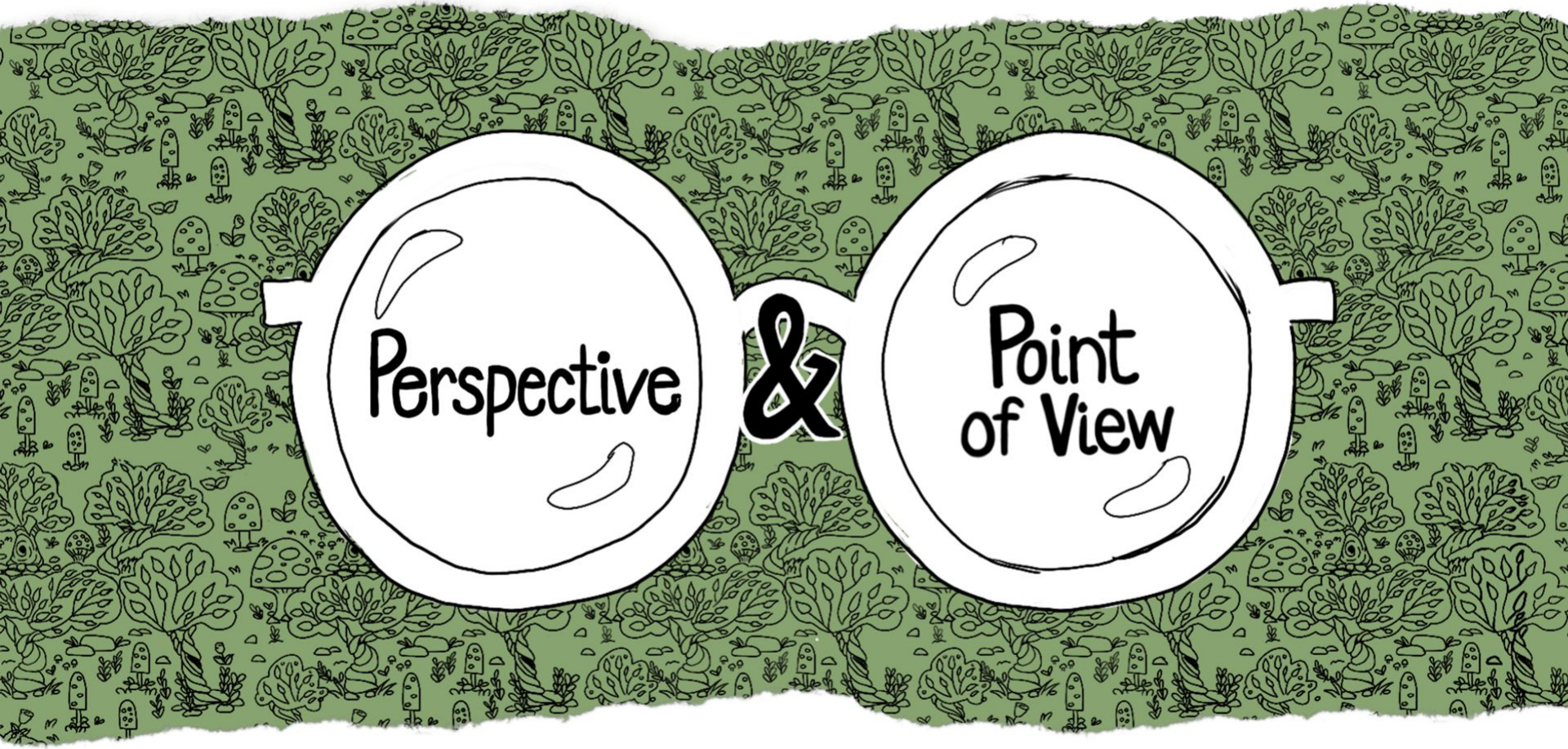
Perspective and Point of View

7.R.1.3: Explain the influence of narrator(s), including unreliable narrator(s), and/or shifts in point of view in a literary text.

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Benchmark Introduction



Benchmark:

Explain the influence of the narrator, including an unreliable narrator, and/or shifts in point of view in literature.

Definition of Perspective

An attitude toward or way of thinking about something.

Definition of Point of View

Point of view in literature is the way a story is told.

Ask yourself: Who is narrating the story?

Narrative Points of View

First-person: The narrator tells the story through their own eyes, using the pronoun “I.” The narrator is also a character in the story.

Second-person: The narrator tells the story directly to someone—often the reader—using the second-person pronoun “you.”

Third-person: The narrator is not in the story. The narration uses third-person pronouns (“he,” “she,” “they”) to refer to characters.

Pay Attention to the Narrator

Who narrates the story has an influence on **how** the reader experiences and understands the characters, events, and ideas.

Consider the influence of narrative point of view in “Little Red Riding Hood.”

In the folk tale “Little Red Riding Hood,” the girl does not realize that she is actually talking to a wolf who has killed her grandmother and is now disguised in the grandmother’s clothes.

Third-person Point of View

A **third-person omniscient narrator** knows the thoughts and feelings of all characters.

The narrator describes the thoughts and feelings of all characters:

“Grandmother, what big ears you have,” said the girl, *feeling strange*. “All the better to hear you with,” the wolf replied, *thinking how easy this hunt would be.*

Third-person Point of View

A **third-person limited narrator** only knows the thoughts and feelings of one character, so the reader sees events through that character's eyes.

The narrator sees events only through Red Riding Hood's eyes:

"Grandmother, what big ears you have!" said the girl. She gazed at her grandmother, *amazed at her transformed appearance and worried that her favorite gran must be dreadfully sick.*
"All the better to hear you with," the wolf growled.

First-person Point of View

The **first-person narrator** is a character in the story. The way this narrator describes events and other characters reveals the narrator's mindset.

The wolf as first-person narrator:

"Grandmother, what big ears you have," the girl said to me. Now, *I do not make it a normal practice to hunt children*, but *I had my own wolf pups back in the den,* desperate to eat. What choice did I have! "All the better to hear you with," I growled.

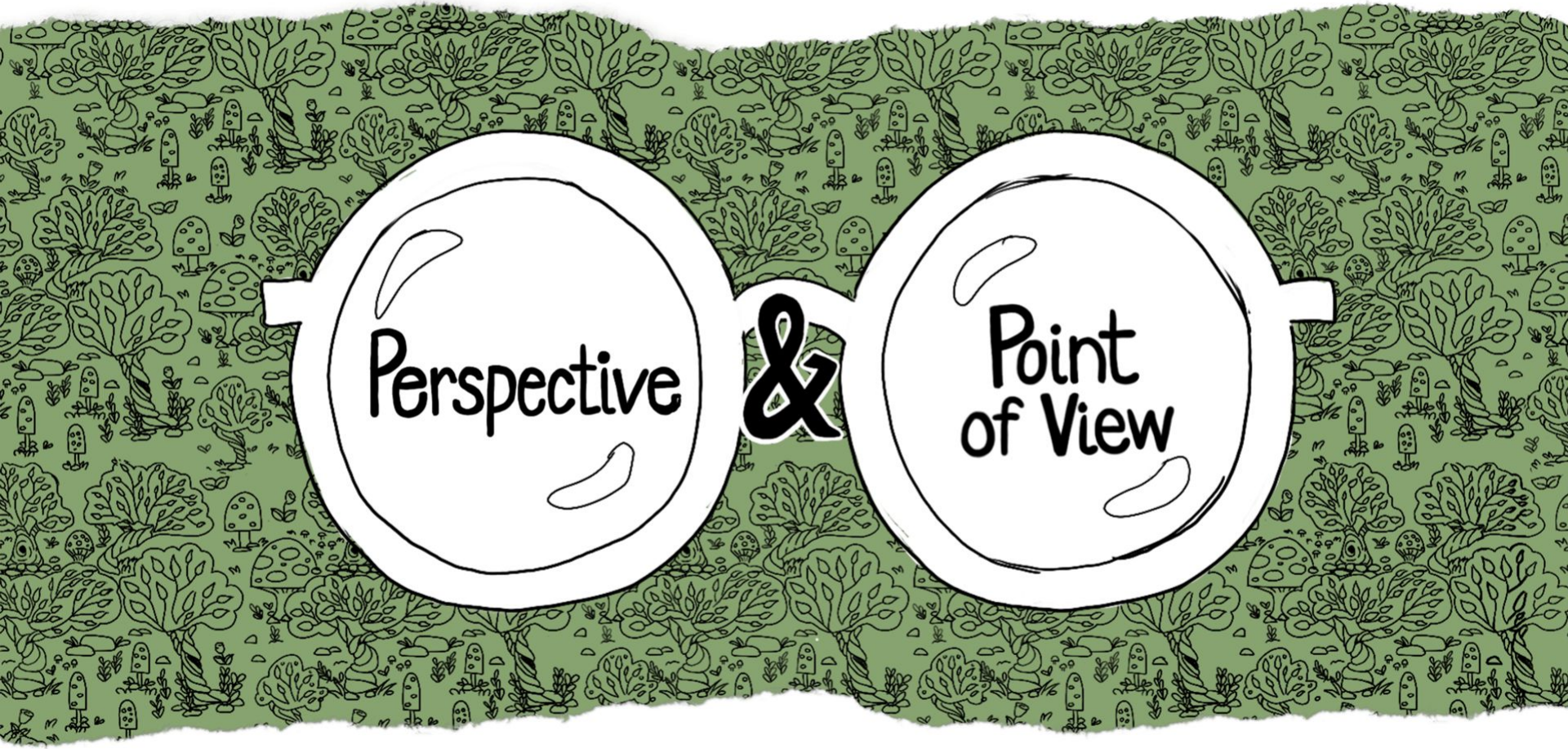
The Unreliable Narrator

Be careful! An **unreliable narrator** does not accurately present or understand events or characters.

Red Riding Hood as an unreliable narrator:

“Grandmother, what big ears you have,” I said, leaning closer to my grandmother. *She looked strange—her nose was longer and thick whiskers sprouted around her lips. And she smelled like an old dog. Wow, I thought, she must be a lot sicker than Mom told me.*

Benchmark Skill Routine



How to analyze the influence of a narrator

Read closely, highlight, and annotate details that reveal the narrator's perspective.
Focus on details about what the narrator does, says, and thinks.

How to analyze the influence of a narrator

Determine in what ways the narrator might be unreliable:

- Are there details that contradict the narrator?
- Would other characters describe things the same way?
- Are there places where you disagree with the narrator’s understanding or perspective?

How to analyze the influence of a narrator

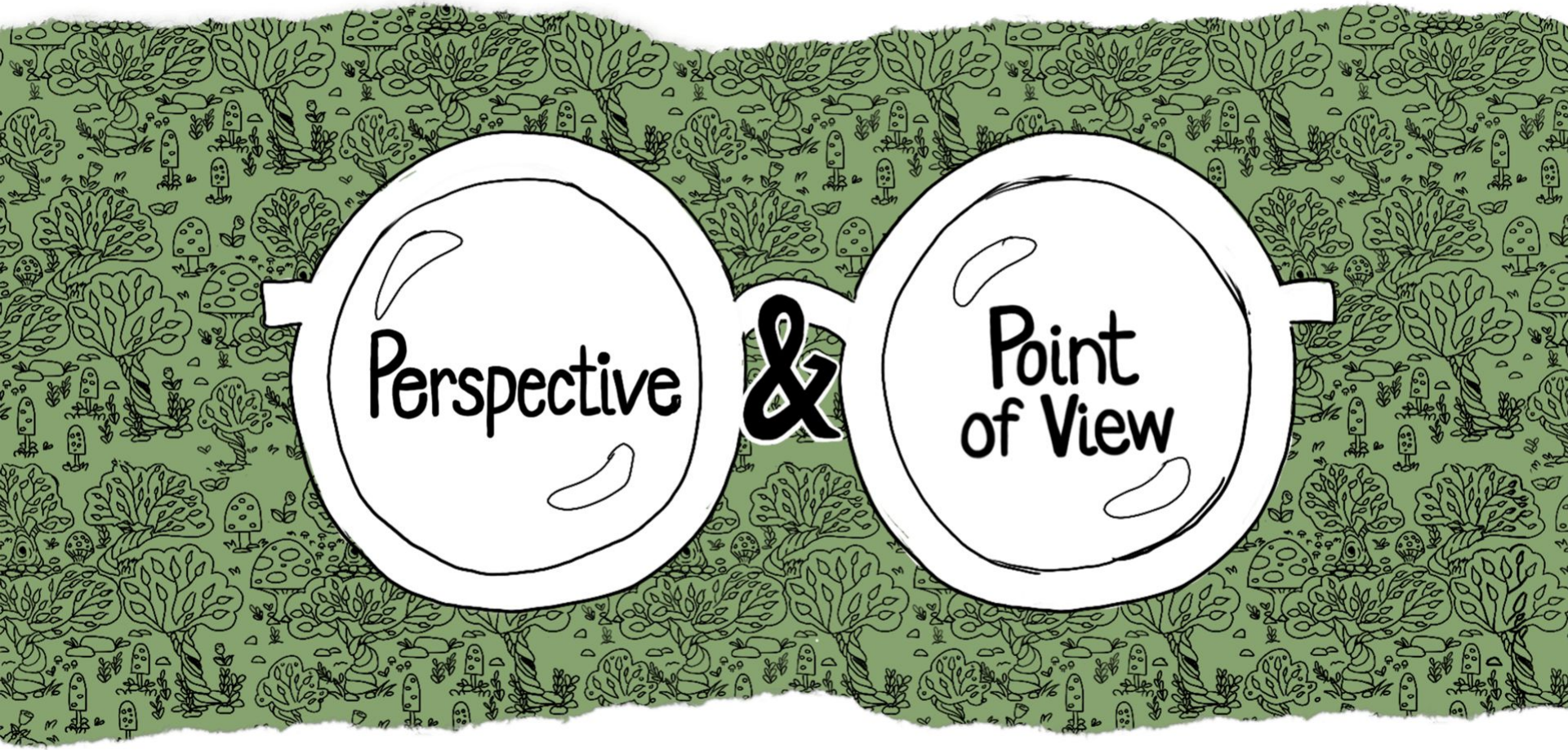
Consider the influence of the narrator’s perspective and point of view:

How does the narrator’s understanding of events, settings, characters, and ideas influence your experience as a reader?

Remember

1. Highlight and annotate details that reveal the narrator’s perspective.
2. Pay attention to details that identify ways in which the narrator may be unreliable.
3. Consider how the narrator’s understanding of events, settings, characters, and ideas influences your experience as a reader.

Benchmark in Action: Example of how to analyze the influence of a narrator



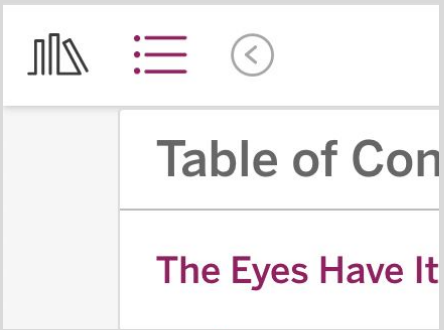
Get ready to read two passages in “The Eyes Have It” by Philip K. Dick.



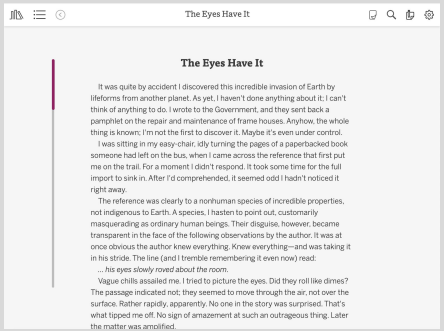
1. Open the Library app.



2. Type “The Eyes Have It” into the search bar.



3. Click on the title of the story to open it.



4. Read paragraphs 3–7 in “The Eyes Have It.”

“The Eyes Have It”

Context for Passage 1

After reading a novel found on a bus, the narrator becomes increasingly horrified and convinced that the book accidentally reveals the existence of aliens on Earth.

Read paragraphs 3–7 in “The Eyes Have It.”

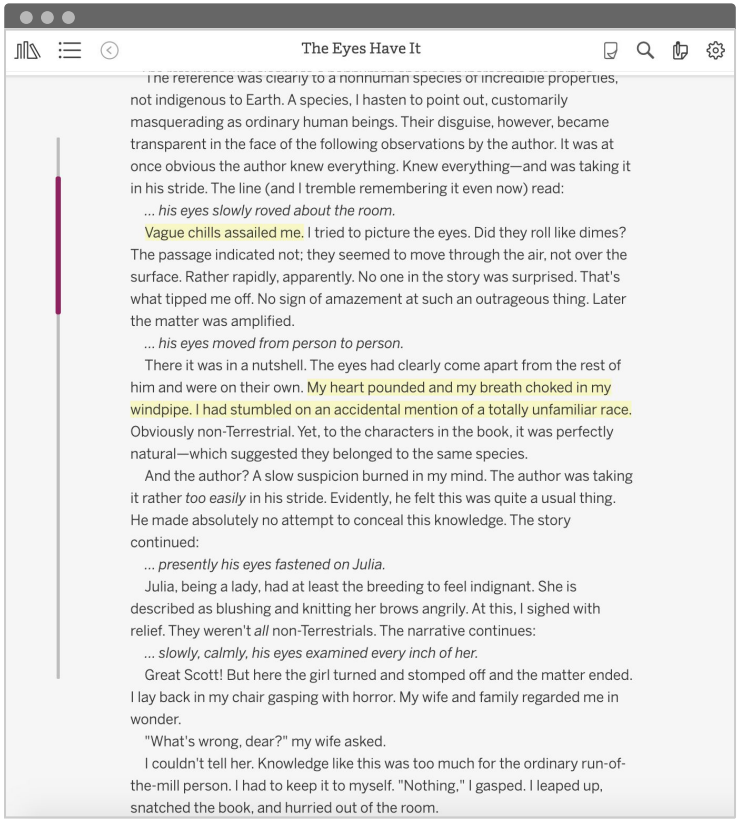
As you read...

- look for details that reveal the narrator’s perspective.
- identify ways in which the narrator may be unreliable.
- think about how the narrator influences your experience as a reader.

Practice Step 1

Read closely, highlight, and annotate details to reveal the narrator’s perspective.

Practice Step 1

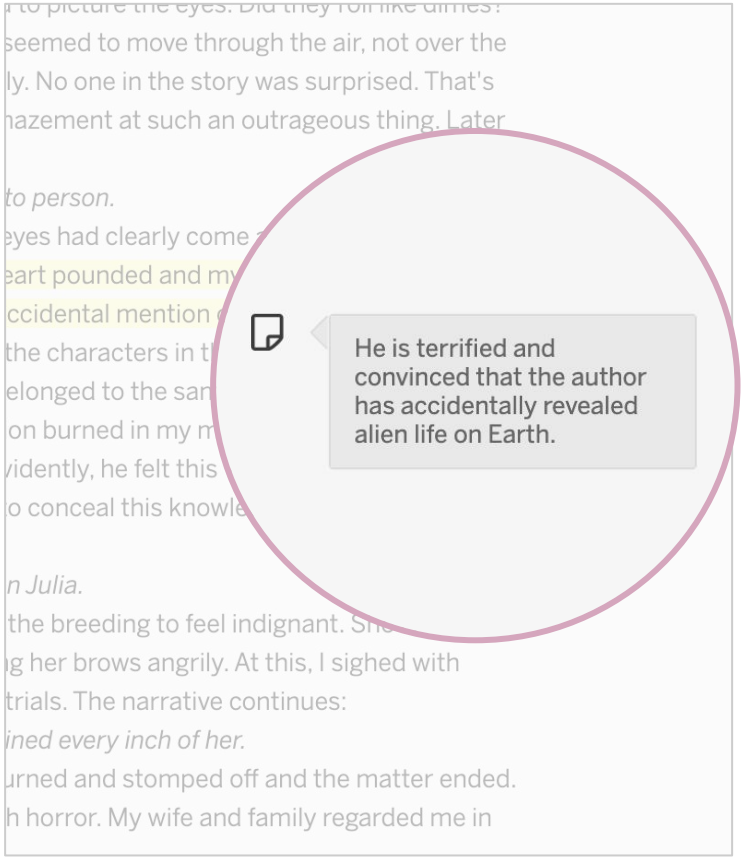


Highlight what the narrator does, says, and thinks.

“Vague chills assailed me.”

“My heart pounded and my breath choked in my windpipe. I had stumbled on an accidental mention of a totally unfamiliar race.”

Practice Step 1



Annotate details that reveal the narrator's perspective.

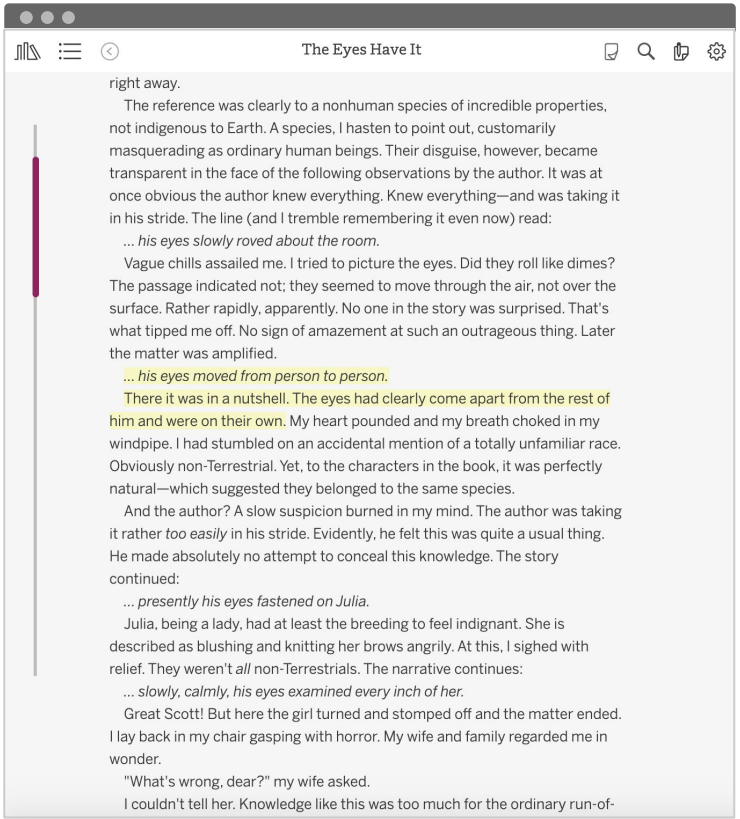
He is terrified and convinced that the author has accidentally revealed alien life on Earth.

Practice Step 2

Determine in what ways the narrator might be unreliable:

- Are there details that contradict the narrator?
- Would other characters describe things the same way?
- Are there places where you disagree with the narrator’s understanding or perspective?

Practice Step 2

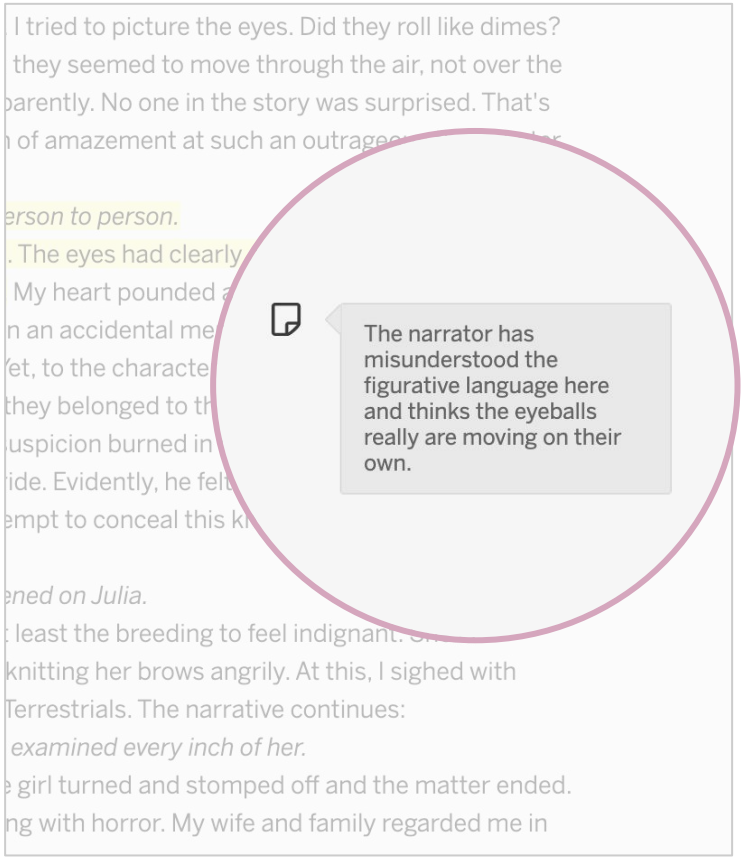


Review highlights and add any other words or phrases that reveal whether the narrator is unreliable.

"*... his eyes moved from person to person.*"

"There it was in a nutshell. The eyes had clearly come apart from the rest of him and were on their own."

Practice Step 2



Annotate a detail about the narrator.

The narrator has misunderstood the figurative language here and thinks the eyeballs really are moving on their own.

Practice Step 3

Consider the influence of the narrator’s perspective and point of view:

How does the narrator’s understanding of events, settings, characters, and ideas influence your experience as a reader?

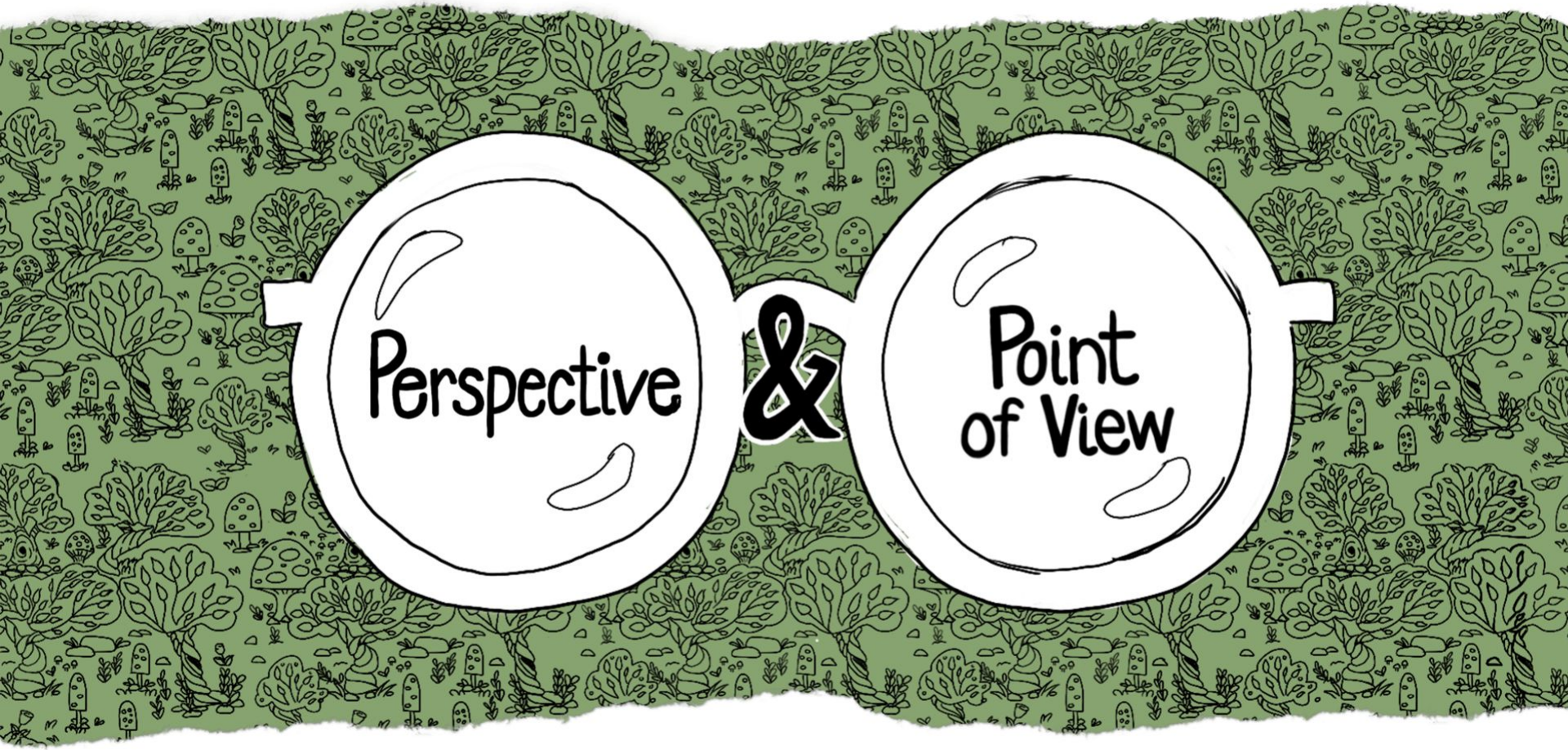
Practice Step 3 Example:

Every time this narrator reads a figurative phrase, he understands it literally. So he decides that alien creatures must be living among us. The reader knows that these are figurative phrases, so his description of what is happening is unreliable and funny!

Remember

1. Highlight and annotate details that reveal the narrator’s perspective.
2. Pay attention to details that identify ways in which the narrator may be unreliable.
3. Consider how the narrator’s understanding of events, settings, characters, and ideas influences your experience as a reader.

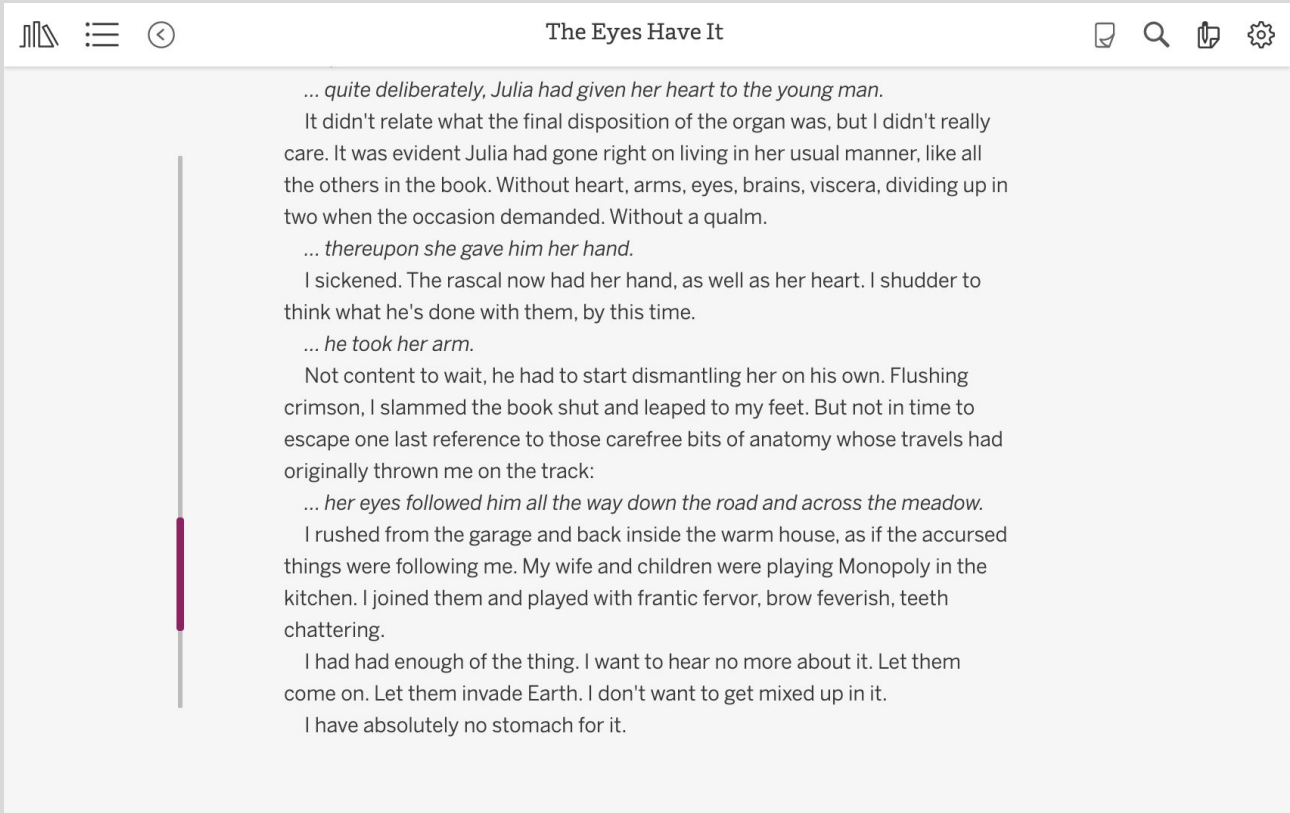
Independent Practice



Benchmark:

Explain the influence of the narrator, including an unreliable narrator, and/or shifts in point of view in literature.

Now read paragraphs 31–37 in “The Eyes Have It.”



“The Eyes Have It”

Context for Passage 2

The narrator becomes increasingly disgusted by the author’s descriptions of body parts working independent of the body. He tries, unsuccessfully, to distract himself from the idea of aliens on Earth.

Practice how to analyze the influence of a narrator

Step 1

Highlight and annotate details that reveal the narrator’s perspective.

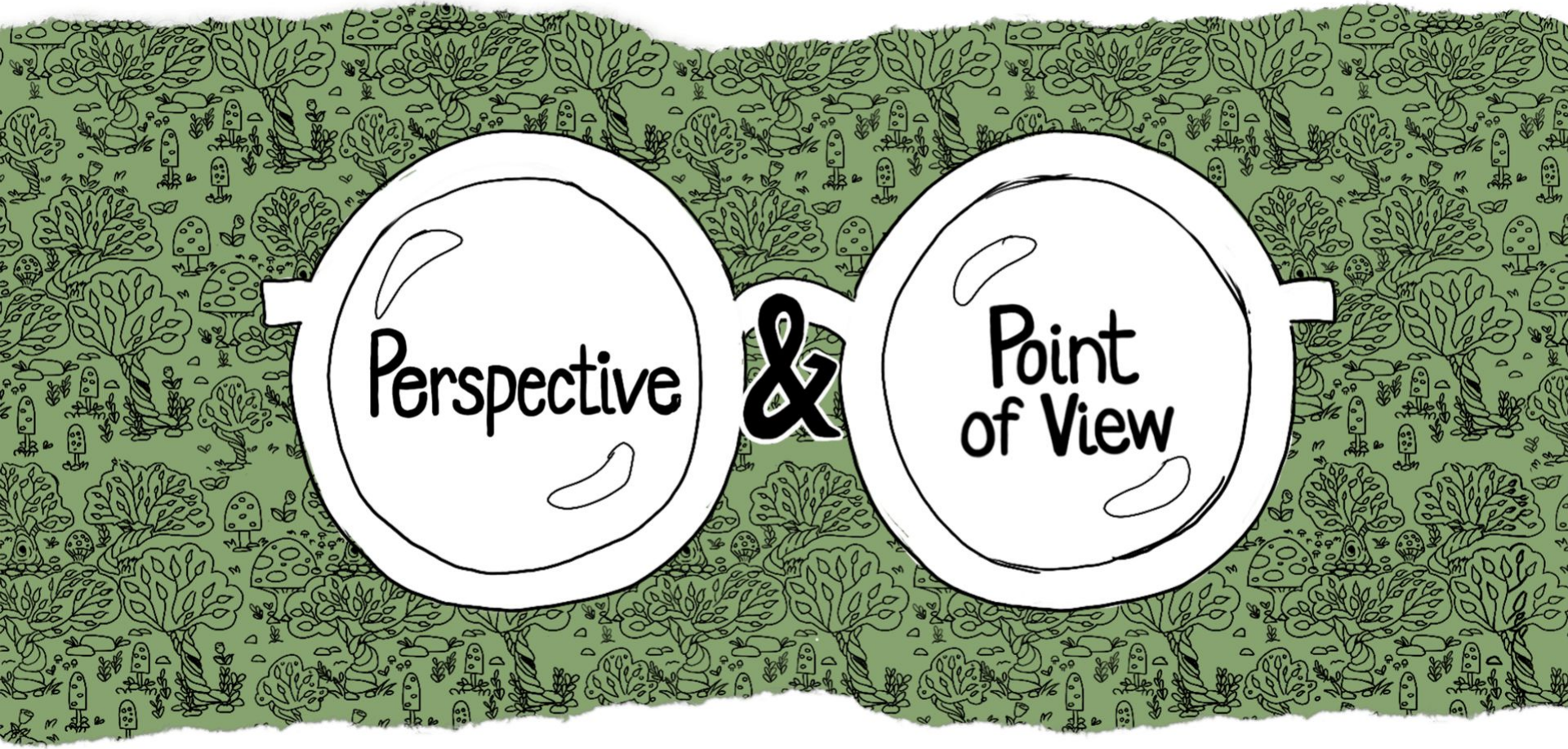
Step 2

Pay attention to details that identify ways in which the narrator may be unreliable.

Step 3

Consider how the narrator influences your experience as a reader.

Check for Understanding



Share and Discuss

1. What are two or three additional details that reveal the narrator is unreliable?

Share and Discuss

2. How does his perspective affect the plot? How does he continue to influence your experience as a reader?

Share and Discuss

3. Why do you think the writer chose this narrator?