FOCUS THE LEARNING

Introduction: Our point of view is the way we look at situations, in our reading, in our writing, and in our daily lives. Have you ever looked at something differently from your parents? Your point of view about bedtime, for example, could be very different from your parents’ point of view. When we read, we need to think carefully about the point of view. Who is telling the story? How does the storyteller’s point of view affect the information that we receive as readers? As we read excerpts from *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, we’ll consider point of view.

INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD
Model and Guide Practice

READ CHAPTER 1 THROUGH “THAT’S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE.”

One thing I notice right away is the word *I*. The narrator, Ponyboy, is telling the story himself. This is called the first-person point of view. This point of view has good points and bad: it’s interesting to know the thoughts of one of the characters, but it can also be limiting. I won’t know other characters’ thoughts unless they share them with the narrator. I can already tell a lot about this narrator, his family, his situation, and how he feels about other people. I would characterize this narrator as matter-of-fact, realistic, and independent. His point of view seems to be that there are differences between people, and we can just accept them for what they are.

Think about the narrator and his point of view. Evaluate my statements based on evidence in the story.

IN CHAPTER 3, READ FROM “SODA HAD THIS BUCKSKIN HORSE…” TO “…THE SAME SUNSET.” At first, Ponyboy talked about the differences between Socs and Greasers. But now that he has had time to talk with a Soc, I am wondering if his point of view is changing a little bit.

What might be changing in Ponyboy’s point of view? What causes his point of view to change? Mine the text for evidence.

IN CHAPTER 3, READ FROM “‘BIG-TIME SOCS’…” TO “IN THE COUNTRY…” Now I am seeing points of view of other characters. We can’t hear Johnny’s inner thoughts, but we can hear his point of view though his dialogue and Ponyboy’s reactions.

Explain what you can figure out about Johnny’s point of view in this part of the text. Compare and contrast his point of view with Ponyboy’s point of view.

MINE THE TEXT FOR MORE EXAMPLES. Read more examples and discuss points of view. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 show outsiders’ points of view. Chapter 7 and Chapter 11 include conversations between Ponyboy and Randy that show their points of view. Johnny’s letter in Chapter 12 reveals his point of view.

END OF STORY REFLECTION

This story makes me think deeply about point of view. What makes point of view a bit challenging here is that we have a window into the thoughts of only one character. I wonder, for example, how the story might be different if Cherry or Randy were telling it, or a parent of one of the children Johnny saves. When authors carefully craft point of view in a text, they can deliver a message, perhaps in a way we didn’t think of before. The points of view in *The Outsiders* challenge my thinking about how different groups of people might get along—or not.

Evaluate the author’s choice of point of view. Why do you think she chose Ponyboy to tell the story? How would the story be different if another character were telling it?

LITERARY ELEMENTS AND DEVICES • 207
Tip for Share the Reading

Read the first paragraph. Ask students if they can figure out from whose point of view "One Simple Device?" is told. Read on to check students’ predictions. What details in the text helped them determine how the speaker feels?

Tip for Readers Theater Script

Explain that "Points of View" contains three "episodes," each with several voices that have different points of view. Ask students if they can identify the various speakers. What clues in the text suggest the various points of view? Remind students to use their voices to convey the viewpoints.

EXTEND THE LEARNING

☆ Work point of view into a content-area lesson. In a health lesson, for example, students can analyze media messages for points of view on issues such as nutrition and exercise. In social studies, students can read texts that offer varying points of view on historical events.

☆ Invite students to retell a story they have read in class, telling it from a different point of view.

☆ Have students do a survey of selected Internet sources by examining them for instances of bias. They can determine the usefulness of certain websites by looking for evidence of slanted points of view.

☆ Students will enjoy reading The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka and comparing it to the traditional tale. How do the two stories vary in their points of view?

☆ Students can write editorials for their school newspaper on a topic of interest. Reflect on their points of view and the best ways that they could support those points of view.

ASSESS THE LEARNING

> Have students identify point of view in independent reading selections. Assess their ability to identify the speaker as well as their ability to determine how that speaker affects the delivery of the message.

> Ask students to write about a content-area topic from two points of view. In science, for example, they might write from the point of view of both predator and prey. Assess their understanding of point of view based on their writing.

INFUSION OF FORMAL LANGUAGE

Test-style language

The point of view offered in The Outsiders is that of

Ponyboy's viewpoint is

A. Johnny.
B. Cherry.
C. Ponyboy.
D. an outside narrator.

A. greasers deserve the lives they have.
B. he could never be a friend with a Soc.
C. it is easier to live without parents than with them.
D. the sunset looks the same, no matter where you see it.
One Simple Device?

I’m getting very tired of how you take me for granted. I keep your pants closed and where they belong. All those mosquitoes buzzing around your tent? I keep them out! Remember when you dropped your backpack? None of your books fell out, all because of me.

People call me a simple device, but I rely on physics. I’m smarter than I look! My inventor called me a clasp locker when he created me in the late 1800s. The B. F. Goodrich Company gave me the snappier name, zipper, when they used me on some rubber boots in the early 1900s.

I actually have something in common with a doorstop. A doorstop is a wedge that holds a door open by exerting an upward force to the base of the door. I have teeth on either side of me, and each tooth has a hook on it, alternated with a hollow space. My zipper pull has wedges. When someone zips me up, the wedges exert the force that moves the teeth together. It sounds easy, but believe me, this takes precision. The teeth and hollow spots have to be the same size. The wedge and the teeth have to be at the right angle to properly apply the force. But if all of this works, I’m very strong when I’m zipped up.

See how impressive I am? Show me some respect!
Points of View

Voice 1: I've told you before, you shouldn't do that! It will take seven years to digest.

Voice 2: I don't see how that's possible. Seriously! I've swallowed it before, and if it took that long, I'd have huge gobs in my stomach. I'd be sick. It can't be true.

Voice 3: Research has shown that the only way gum would stay inside your stomach that long would be if it were so large, it got trapped in your intestines. It would have to be larger around than a quarter.

Voice 4: Gum is pretty immune to the digestive process. It usually just leaves the body looking the same as when it came in.

Voice 5: So it won't harm you to swallow gum, but it’s probably a good idea not to.

Voice 1: Don’t cross your eyes! You know if they do that, they’ll stay that way.

Voice 2: But it looks funny. And I don’t keep them crossed that long. I'll be okay.
Voice 3: Your eyeballs are controlled by six muscles. If you look up, down, or sideways, the muscles move. Crossing your eyes makes those muscles move that way. If something comes really close to your face, your eyes cross naturally.

Voice 4: Crossing your eyes may very well strain those eye muscles. You could have spasms or twitches, and your eyes could feel very tired. But no evidence suggests they would stick that way for more than a short time.

Voice 5: So your eyes would feel normal after an hour or so. But do you really want to have tired eyes? Besides, it’s not nice to torment your little brother.

Voice 1: Those little silica packets say "Do not eat" for a reason. They’re in that bottle to keep the contents dry, not to eat.

Voice 2: I heard that if you eat those, you can dry out your entire body. They probably don’t taste very good, but I wonder what would happen if you ate them.

Voice 3: Silica is nearly harmless. Silica absorbs and holds moisture. If you happened to put some in your mouth, you would have a very bad case of dry mouth.

Voice 4: Ingesting silica could have a few irritating side effects, such as dry eyes and throat and an itchy nose. But a 210-pound man would have to consume 58,800 packets of silica gel to soak up all the water in his body!

Voice 5: I think we agree on this one. Not harmful, but not fun! Let’s just throw those packets away.