

## Grade 6 / Week 6

### Standards Covered this Week

- LAFS.6.RL.2.6:** Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

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**Name**

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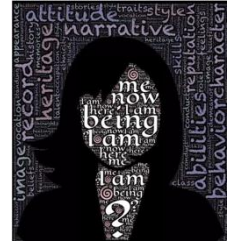
**Teacher: Mazyck**

### A Note to Parents

This week, we are continuing our unit entitled “Embracing Our Differences” and are reading the short story “Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan. Your student will be considering the themes of identity, friendship, and family with this text and will be focusing on the skills of determining how an author develops the narrator’s point of view.

Here are some *optional* online resources to support or extend your student’s thinking:

- Online version of “Fish Cheeks” <https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/fish-cheeks> (Your student can also access this text through their CommonLit account on ClassLink and can even have access to an audio version or translation tool for the text.)
- Video of Amy Tan speaking at the White House (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cihZKJRj8AA>)



## Day 1: Unit Skills

### Embracing Our Differences

The texts we'll read in this unit feature characters who are thinking about their own identity. Think back to the personality test you took last week. Did it help you think about your own identity or reinforce something you already knew about yourself?

**Skills Focus:** In this unit, we'll analyze how an author develops a narrator's **point of view** or a character's **perspective**.

- The **narrator** is the voice that tells a story.
  - If the narrator is a character in the story, we call that **first-person narration**.
  - If the narrator is NOT a character in the story we call that **third-person narration**.

As Ajira gave Kenji a boost over the wall, **she** had a sinking feeling in her stomach. *Will I ever see him again?* she wondered.

Third-Person Narrator



As he escaped over the wall, **I** just knew I would never see my brother again.

First-Person Narrator

- **Point of view** or **perspective** is the way a character sees a person or situation.
  - The term "point of view" is usually used when we are discussing the narrator.
  - The term "perspective" is usually used when we are discussing characters.
  - But some resources in this unit may use these words interchangeably.
- As we read, we will identify how the author develops point of view or perspective through
  - **Actions** (the things they do)
  - **Dialogue** (the things they say)
  - **Thoughts**
- To analyze how an author develops a character's perspective, we
  - Determine **what the character thinks and believes** about a person or situation.
  - Identify the **way the author is developing the point of view**: dialogue, thoughts, or actions.

**Point of View Practice:** Read the following excerpt then follow the instructions below.

Excerpt from "Raymond's Run" by Toni Cade Bambara

Now some people like to act like things come easy to them, won't let on that they practice. Not me. I'll high-prance down 34th Street like a rodeo pony to keep my knees strong even if it does get my mother uptight so that she walks ahead like she's not with me, don't know me, is all by herself on a shopping trip, and I am somebody else's crazy child. Now you take Cynthia Procter for instance. She's just the opposite. If there's a test tomorrow, she'll say something like, "Oh, I guess I'll play handball this afternoon and watch television tonight," just to let you know she ain't thinking about the test. Or like last week when she won the spelling bee for the millionth time, "A good thing you got 'receive,' Squeaky, cause I would have got it wrong. I completely forgot about the spelling bee" ... I could kill people like that. I stay up all night studying the words for the spelling bee. And you can see me any time of day practicing running. I never walk if I can trot, and shame on Raymond if he can't keep up.

- A. **Find Evidence:** Underline two details that show the narrator's point of view about practicing.  
B. **Write:** In your own words, what is the narrator's point of view about practicing?

- C. **Select One:** How does the author develop the narrator's point of view in this section?  
a. Thoughts  
b. Dialogue  
c. Actions

**Compare Answers:** Here are sample answers to the previous questions. Do they look similar to yours?

I'm thinking about the details I found. I notice that:

- The narrator disagrees with people who pretend they don't have to practice.
- The narrator is open and proud of how much she practices.

My answer to Question B:

*The narrator believes you should be open about how much you need to practice in order to succeed.*

C. **Select One:** How does the author develop the narrator's point of view in this section?

- a. **Thoughts**  
b. Dialogue  
c. Actions

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## INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the excerpt from “The Medicine Bag” Notice what the narrator thinks, says, and does. Then answer the questions which follow.

Excerpt from “The Medicine Bag” by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve
<p>“After the [medicine] bag is yours, you must put a piece of prairie sage within and never open it again until you pass it on to your son.” He replaced the pebble and the piece of iron and tied the bag.</p> <p>I stood up, somehow knowing I should. Grandpa slowly rose from the bed and stood upright in front of me, holding the bag before my face. I closed my eyes and waited for him to slip it over my head. But he spoke.</p> <p>“No, you need not wear it.” He placed the soft leather bag in my right hand and closed my other hand over it. ...</p> <p>“Put it safely away until you are again on the reservation. Wear it then, when you replace the sacred sage.”</p> <p>Grandpa turned and sat again on the bed. Wearily he leaned his head against the pillow. “Go,” he said, “I will sleep now.”</p> <p>“Thank you, Grandpa,” I said softly, and left with the bag in my hands.</p> <p>That night Mom and Dad took Grandpa to the hospital. Two weeks later I stood alone on the lonely prairie of the reservation and put the sacred sage in my medicine bag.</p>
<p>A. <b>Find Evidence:</b> <u>Underline</u> two details that show how the narrator views the medicine bag his grandfather is giving him.</p> <p>B. <b>Write:</b> In your own words, what is the narrator’s point of view about the medicine bag?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>C. <b>Select One:</b> How does the author <i>mostly</i> develop the narrator’s point of view in this section?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Thoughts</li><li>b. Dialogue</li><li>c. Actions</li></ul>

### **Day 2, Activity 1: Quick Write**

In your opinion, who has greater influence on our identity: our family or our friends? Why?

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## Day 2: Activity 2: "Fish Cheeks"

Today, you will read a short story about a young girl's dinner with her family and several guests. The author, Amy Tan, is an American writer whose work often provides insight into the experiences of Chinese Americans and family relationships.



"Untitled" by Jametlene Reskp is licensed under CC0.

Don't forget our skill focus. As you read, try to determine the **narrator's point of view** and examine how the author **develops** this perspective. As you read each section, pause and address the questions to the right of the text.

### "Fish Cheeks" by Amy Tan

[1] I fell in love with the minister's son the winter I turned fourteen. He was not Chinese, but as white as Mary in the manger. For Christmas I prayed for this blond-haired boy, Robert, and a slim new American nose.

[2] When I found out that my parents had invited the minister's family over for Christmas Eve dinner, I cried. What would Robert think of our shabby Chinese Christmas? What would he think of our noisy Chinese relatives who lacked proper American manners? What terrible disappointment would he feel upon seeing not a roasted turkey and sweet potatoes but Chinese food?

[3] On Christmas Eve I saw that my mother had outdone herself in creating a strange menu. She was pulling black veins out of the backs of fleshy prawns.<sup>1</sup> The kitchen was littered with appalling<sup>2</sup> mounds of raw food: A slimy rock cod with bulging eyes that pleaded not to be thrown into a pan of hot oil. Tofu, which looked like stacked wedges of rubbery white sponges. A bowl soaking dried fungus back to life. A plate of squid, their backs crisscrossed with knife markings so they resembled bicycle tires.

#### POINT OF VIEW: Paragraphs 2-3

- A. **Write:** What is the narrator's point of view toward her Chinese heritage and family?
- B. **Find Evidence:**  
Underline two details that support your response.
- C. **Underline One:** How does the author develop the narrator's point of view in this section?  
Actions  
Thoughts  
Dialogue

<p>[4] And then they arrived — the minister’s family and all my relatives in a clamor<sup>3</sup> of doorbells and crumpled Christmas packages. Robert grunted hello, and I pretended he was not worthy of existence.</p> <p>[5] Dinner threw me deeper into despair. My relatives licked the ends of their chopsticks and reached across the table, dipping them into the dozen or so plates of food. Robert and his family waited patiently for platters to be passed to them. My relatives murmured with pleasure when my mother brought out the whole steamed fish. Robert grimaced. Then my father poked his chopsticks just below the fish eye and plucked out the soft meat. “Amy, your favorite,” he said, offering me the tender fish cheek. I wanted to disappear.</p> <p>[6] At the end of the meal my father leaned back and belched loudly, thanking my mother for her fine cooking. “It’s a polite Chinese custom to show you are satisfied,” explained my father to our astonished guests. Robert was looking down at his plate with a reddened face. The minister managed to muster up a quiet burp. I was stunned into silence for the rest of the night.</p>	<p><b>POINT OF VIEW: Paragraphs 5-6</b> <b>Write:</b> Reread the last sentence of each paragraph. What do Amy’s reactions to her family reveal about her point of view?</p>
<p>[7] After everyone had gone, my mother said to me, “You want to be the same as American girls on the outside.” She handed me an early gift. It was a miniskirt in beige tweed. “But inside you must always be Chinese. You must be proud you are different. Your only shame is to have shame.”</p> <p>[8] And even though I didn’t agree with her then, I knew that she understood how much I had suffered during the evening’s dinner. It wasn’t until many years later — long after I had gotten over my crush on Robert — that I was able to fully appreciate her lesson and the true purpose behind our particular menu. For Christmas Eve that year, she had chosen all my favorite foods.</p>	<p><b>Paragraph 7</b> <b>Write:</b> What does Amy’s mother mean when she says, “Your only shame is to have shame.”</p> <p><b>POINT OF VIEW: Paragraphs 7-8</b></p> <p>A. <b>Write:</b> How has Amy’s point of view changed?</p> <p>B. <b>Write:</b> What has caused this change?</p> <p>C. <b>Underline One:</b> How does the author develop a change in Amy’s point of view in this section? <i>Actions</i> <i>Thoughts</i> <i>Dialogue</i></p>

**Day 3: Text-Dependent Questions**

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. How does the narrator's description of the cod in paragraph 3 impact the tone of the [RL.4] passage?
  - A. She describes it as "slimy" and pathetic, which contributes to the angry tone of the passage.
  - B. She describes it as "slimy" with "bulging eyes," which contributes to the horrified tone of the passage.
  - C. She describes it as pleading with big "bulging eyes," which contributes to the pitying tone of the passage.
  - D. She describes it as pleading not to be cooked, which contributes to the mocking tone of the passage.
  
2. How does the narrator's point of view affect how the events are described in the [RL.6] passage?
  - A. She is nervous to have the boy she likes over for Christmas dinner, and so the text focuses entirely on the boy's reactions.
  - B. She is bored with her family's old Chinese traditions and wants to try new modern customs, and this affects how she focuses on being more "American."
  - C. She is excited to have the minister's son over for Christmas, and this excitement causes her to criticize every little detail of her mother's cooking.
  - D. She is embarrassed by her family's Chinese customs, and this shame influences how she describes the food and her family's behavior.

3. PART A: What does the word “despair” mean as used in paragraph 5? [RL.4]
- A. shock
  - B. misery
  - C. frustration
  - D. disgust

4. PART B: Which of the following quotes best supports the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
- A. “Robert grunted hello, and I pretended he was not worthy of existence.” (Paragraph 4)
  - B. “My relatives licked the ends of their chopsticks and reached across the table” (Paragraph 5)
  - C. “I was stunned into silence for the rest of the night.” (Paragraph 6)
  - D. “how much I had suffered during the evening’s dinner” (Paragraph 8)

5. What does paragraph 8 reveal about the narrator’s character development? [RL.3]
- A. After the dinner, she realizes that the minister’s son is not as friendly as she thought.
  - B. As an adult, she regrets trying to fit in with other Americans and losing her identity.
  - C. Years later, she learns to appreciate her family and her Chinese American identity.
  - D. Years later, she learns to love her mother’s cooking, which she previously hated.

6. What do paragraphs 2-3 reveal about the narrator’s point of view? How does the author develop her point of view in this section of the text?

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Requirements for Your Short Response:

- Claim (or answer)
- Evidence
  - Explanation
- Evidence
  - Explanation

Sentence Prompts for Introducing Evidence:

- In the text/In the story...
- In paragraph X,...
- When X happens/When character Y does/says...
- The author illustrates this when....
- For example,...

Sentence Prompts for Explaining Evidence:

- This means...
- This illustrates...
- This reveals...
- This highlights...



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**Day 4, Activity 1: Switching Points of View**

Think of how the narrator’s point of view shifts, or changes, in paragraph 8. Now, look back to 3 different reactions the narrator had during the earlier parts of the story and rewrite them to reflect how she would have reacted differently with her outlook from paragraph 8. Complete the graphic organizer based on your thoughts. An example has been provided for you.

Quote from story showing narrator’s point of view through thoughts, dialogue, or actions.	Rewrite based on the point of view the narrator develops in paragraph 8.
“For Christmas I prayed for this blond-haired boy, Robert, and a slim new American nose.” (paragraph 1)	For Christmas I enjoyed my family’s unique traditions and appreciated my Chinese heritage.