



INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

As we go through our lives, we think lots of things that we never say out loud. The great thing about stories is that many of them let us get inside a character's head and hear what they are thinking.

Interior monologue is the storytelling mode that shows us what a character is thinking. The word **interior** means "inside," meaning the thoughts happen inside the character's head, and the word **monologue** means a conversation between one person and him- or herself. Another term for interior monologue is *internal monologue*.

Why Use Interior Monologue?

- **To provide information.** In this example, we learn that Bree hasn't watched "Arthur" in six years. It just happens to be something she thinks, so we get to see inside her head AND learn something about her at the same time. :

Ugh. *Arthur*? The last time I watched that show was six years ago!

- **To add tension.** This section of interior monologue makes us wait longer to see what Bree will do about the frog. Because she's kind of yelling at herself here, it builds the emotion in the story as we wait to see if she'll follow her own commands.

Do it, I told myself. Quit being such a chicken. This is not a big deal. Just drop the trash can down. Do it NOW.

- **To help us understand characters.** This passage lets us see the way Bree thinks and helps us better understand how her fear feels to her.

If I waited a few minutes, maybe he would go away. But then I realized that letting him wander off would be worse. He could crawl up to the top of a door frame and jump on me when I walked by. Or he could go into the bathroom and wait inside the toilet for me. Horrible.

How to Format Interior Monologue

There are two different kinds of interior monologue, and you can treat them differently.

- **Indirect** interior monologue is more like a summary of the character’s thoughts, rather than the exact words they say in their heads. For these, you don’t really need to do anything special; just write them like regular sentences.

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- **Direct** interior monologue is where we see the actual words that are being “spoken” inside the character’s head. For these, some writers choose to put those words in italics. Keep in mind that this is not a strict rule: Some writers use italics, and some don’t. Also, using a “speaker tag” to let the reader know that this is the character “talking” inside their head is not required, but sometimes it can be helpful so that the reader isn’t confused.

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What Kinds of Stories Can Use Interior Monologue?

Not all stories can use interior monologue. If you are writing a personal narrative, you should be writing in *first person point of view*, meaning you’re using the “I” voice, so interior monologue would be a perfect fit.

However, if you are writing a short story, you might have chosen a different point of view. To see if your chosen point of view allows for interior monologue, see the following page.

What to Do Now

- Find places in your story to add interior monologue: Look for places where the reader might wonder what the character is thinking, and add some in.

POINT OF VIEW

Not all types of stories can have interior monologue. If a story is told from a certain point of view, we won't see inside any of the characters' heads. This chart shows which points of view allow for interior monologue (IM).

Name	IM?	Definition	Example
1 st person	Yes	Uses "I" voice, sees story through one character's eyes.	I like going to the park.
3 rd person omniscient	Yes	Uses "he/she/they" voice, sees story through many characters' eyes.	She liked going to the park, but he didn't.
3 rd person limited	Yes	Uses "he/she/they" voice, sees story through ONE characters' eyes.	She liked going to the park, but she didn't think he liked it.
3 rd person objective	No	Uses "he/she/they" voice, sees story through no characters' eyes.	They went to the park.