# Lesson 3: Flashback

Name Date

When a writer interrupts the chronological sequence of a story and inserts something that happened before the present action, it is called a **flashback**. Authors often use flashbacks to deepen our understanding of a character or situation.

##### DIRECTIONS: Read the following excerpt narrated by James, a boy living with his family on Jupiter. Then answer the questions that follow.

* 1. “Come on, James,” says Mom. She strokes my hair, hoping this will relax me. “Just close your eyes. You’ll fall asleep.” She continues to whisper soothing words, then disappears to her cubicle. I close my eyes and try to envision soft, peaceful scenes. Cows grazing in green fields. Balloons floating in the sky. It doesn’t work. These images just remind me of Earth and how much I miss it. I lie there, awake and miserable.
	2. I remember when I first came here. We had to go through a 2-week orientation session, led by the “space-docs.” They warned us that some things would seem strange at first. They warned us about the Midday Darkness, how it might be hard at first to get used to it. “Getting exercise helps,” they said. “Go to the Exercise Dome. Run a few miles. Bat a few balls. You just need to adjust to the new sleep cycle.” They promised that I’d get used to it.
	3. But I still can’t sleep. I lie awake, heart pounding, feeling lonely and frightened. Janie, the baby, seems happy here. Mom and Dad claim they like it, too. They’re scientists, and they’ve always dreamed of living on another planet. But I still think all the time about home.

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* 1. I remember the first time I heard about the Jupiter Project. I was at the breakfast table. My mother was the one who told us about it. “Amazing,” she said, “Listen to this. They’re looking for more volunteers for the Jupiter home station.” We had some relatives living on Jupiter. I used to write letters to my cousin Kenny, and he’d tell me about the crazy life he led: school in a space dome, Midday Darkness, multiple moons floating in the sky. I always envied him and said that one day, I’d go, too.
	2. I shift around in the bed, stretch my arms, and try once more to sleep. I close my eyes and see Earth. I cry silently, hoping no one will hear.
1. What is happening in the present action of the story?

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1. This passage contains two flashbacks. Identify them.
2. Why do you think the author used flashbacks to tell the story? How do these flashbacks contribute to your understanding of the main character and his present situation? Explain.

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**For more information on flashbacks, see**

***Glencoe Literature, Course 2,* pp. 613 and R4.**

# Lesson 4: Point of View

Name Date

The relationship that the storyteller has with a story determines the story’s **point of view**. Some different points of view are described below.

* + **first-person point of view** (the story is told by a character in the story who refers to himself or herself as *I*)
	+ **limited third-person point of view** (the story is told by a narrator, who refers to all characters as *he* or *she*, but who only reveals the thoughts and feelings of one character)
	+ **omniscient point of view** or **third-person omniscient** (the story is told by a narrator, who reveals the thoughts and feelings of more than one character)

##### DIRECTIONS: Read the following excerpt from Gary Soto’s “The New and Old Tennies,” an essay taken from his collection A Summer Life. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. Mother looks up from stirring dinner in a black pan, her hips cha-chaing under a chicken-print apron. A smell has touched her. She knows it from somewhere, but where? She taps her spoon against the pan and looks at her son with watered-down hair. He’s a sloppy boy with sloppy posture which neither the nuns nor a strict father could correct. Moons of dirt dwell under his fingernails. His teeth are pasty. His arms are blue with the tattoos of pen markings.
2. Earlier in the day he had walked in a wet field and stepped on something soft. He scraped the bottoms of his new tennis shoes as best he could and continued an incline of mushroom-dark hills, the ropes of his leg muscles tightening, his breath shallow. The canal was west behind the trees, where the leaves mulched in the shadows. Leprous frogs lived in leaf-spotted water, and the fish, dulled by chemicals, floated near the oily surface, their tails waving weakly, their gills like raw, pinkish wounds. He could have walked waist-deep into the canal, cupped a fish in his palm, and shared its misery. But the boy knew better. His mother would have scolded him for getting wet. So he walked along the canal bank, dull as the fish, and threw rocks and watched the rippling targets dilate. He hunched on the bank and wished winter would rise from the mountains, white as a nurse’s hat. Then he could wear two socks on each foot and crunch the miles of frost with his shoes. Then he could slide on the ice and risk his face playing front-yard football.

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1. Compare the first paragraph and second paragraph. Are they told from the same person’s perspective or the perspective of two different people? Explain.

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1. Look at the description of the canal in paragraph 2. Does the author describe the canal from the boy’s perspective, including *only* details that the boy might know or notice? Or does the author include any details that suggest a larger, omniscient perspective? Explain, referring to the text in your answer.
2. What is the point of view of this passage—first person, limited third-person, or third- person omniscient? Explain how you know this.

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