



Deep POV Checklist

Definition and 12+ Ideas You can Use to
Increase Reader Engagement

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Deep Point of View (POV)

Deep POV immerse readers in a single character's senses, thoughts, speech, actions, and reactions.

“In deep POV, the author writes as the character instead of about him. The character and his world come to life for us as we vicariously share his experiences and feel his struggles, pain, triumphs, and disappointments.”

– Jodie Renner, author of [Captivate Your Readers](#)

“Deep point of view is a way of writing fiction in *third-person limited* that silences the narrative voice and takes the reader directly into a character's mind.... Deep POV creates a deeper connection between readers and characters.”

– David Mamet, Playwright, Film Director, Screenwriter, and Author

Third-person Limited

“Limited or ‘close’ third point of view (a narrative that adheres to a single character)... gives you the ability to be inside a character's thoughts, feelings, and sensations, which can give readers a deeper experience of character and scene, and is the most common way to use point of view.”

– Dan Brown, author of [The Da Vinci Code](#)



Close-third POV in Contrast to Deep POV

You can increase reader engagement with deep POV, but each writer must decide when to use it. As with most things in life, moderation is essential.

Also, consider the differences between close-third POV and deep POV.

“In **close third POV**, the character is allowed to think/know things that the reader doesn’t. Because the reader only gets selected glimpses into the character through speech and thought, the author can keep the character’s plans or expectations a secret. Conversely, the author can share details with the reader that the point of view character doesn’t know.”

“In **deep POV**, if the character knows something, the reader knows it. So, you can’t send a character into a situation with a plan fully formed without the reader also knowing the plan. Using an unreliable narrator in deep POV still works so long as the character is lying not to the reader, but to themselves.”

— Lisa Hall-Wilson, [Deep Dive Author Club](#)

Indirect and Direct Internal Dialogue

This excerpt from Marcy Kennedy’s [Deep Point of View: A Busy Writer’s Guide](#) shows the difference between indirect and direct internal dialogue.

- **Indirect internal dialogue** gives the reader an idea of the point-of-view character’s thoughts, but not the exact words they’re thinking.
- **Direct internal dialogue** gives the reader the exact words that the point-of-view character is thinking. It’s written in first person and present tense, regardless of the person and tense of the rest of the story.

Kennedy’s book makes understanding and using deep POV accessible to any writer who wants to increase reader engagement.



Deep POV Checklist

Equip your lead character with a body cam, microphone, and thought monitor, and only share with readers what's picked up by those devices.

- POV Character's Scene**
Write one point of view per scene.
- POV Character's Identity**
Name the POV Character at the start of the scene.
- POV Character's Voice**
Make the voice distinctive and natural.
- POV Character Head-hopping**
Stay within the boundaries of the POV's senses and perceptions.
- Story Information**
Limit to what's crucial to the story (i.e., no information dumps).
- POV Character's Emotions**
Show with body language (no telling, such as with "felt" or "saw").
- POV Character's Awareness**
Base POV's reactions on that character's senses and perceptions.
- Thoughts**
Indirect suggests while direct states (i.e., brief, emphatic italicized).
- Other Character External References**
Use POV's voice and style whenever referring to other characters.
- POV Character's Internal References**
POV refers to self using that character's inner terms, not outer.
- Dialogue Tags**
Replace descriptive tags (e.g., "said") with action beats.
- Author's Voice**
Eliminate writer's presence (i.e., only write from character's POV).
- Settings**
Use locations and weather to influence the POV Character.



For Further Exploration

I encourage you to read books by authors known for using different POV techniques. Below are a few books that show the variations of close third POV and deep POV, the wide range of range of direct and indirect internal dialogue, plus the use of multiple POV characters.

- [The Hunger Games](#) by Suzanne Collins (deep POV in first person)
- [Dreamlander](#) by K. M. Weiland (deep POV for fantasy/science fiction)
- [The Da Vinci Code](#) by Dan Brown (direct/indirect internal dialogue)
- [Silence of the Lambs](#)* by Thomas Harris (direct/Indirect internal dialogue)

**Note: Contains R-rated descriptions and language.*

Here are two excellent books that detail POV techniques with examples:

- [Deep Point of View: A Busy Writer's Guide](#) by Marcy Kennedy
- [Captivate Your Readers](#) by Jodie Renner

Have fun—you've got this!

— *Grant*

