

Writing Basics

Bob Perry



Fundamentals

- Words make sentences
- Sentences make paragraphs
- Paragraphs make chapters
- Chapters make stories

Sentence Fundamentals

SUBJECT

VERB

OBJECT

{
Somebody
or
Something
}

{
is or was
does or did
}

{
something
}

My **name** **is** **India Opel Buloni**, and last summer my **daddy**, the preacher, **sent me** to the store for a box of macaroni-and-cheese, some white rice, and two tomatoes, and **I came back with a dog**.

From *Because of Winn Dixie*



Steps to Writing a Paragraph

1. Write a sentence
2. Write sentences about the first sentence.
3. Make sure each sentence tells something about the first sentence.

Example

¹Ten-year-old India Opal Buloni's mother left her seven years ago. ²Two years ago, about 30,000 dogs were born in Oklahoma. ³India has been asking about her mother ever since, so that she won't forget her mom. ⁴My aunt is loud. ⁵I like macaroni-and-cheese. ⁶When India moves to Naomi, Florida, she befriends a lively stray dog. ⁷The loveable canine helps her meet some unusual characters who teach her about love, life, and forgiveness.

Which sentences don't really fit?

Example

¹Ten-year-old **India** Opal Buloni's mother left her seven years ago. ^{1a}**India** has been asking about her mother ever since, so that she won't forget her mom. ^{1b}When **India** moves to Naomi, Florida, she befriends a lively stray dog. ^{1c}The loveable canine helps **her** meet some unusual characters who teach **her** about love, life, and forgiveness.

Writing a Story

- ❑ Theme or Themes (What do you want the reader to take away?)
- ❑ Point of View (How will you tell the story?)
 - Objective Point of View**
 - Third Person Point of View**
 - First Person Point of View**
- ❑ Characters
- ❑ Setting
- ❑ First, Last, Middle

From *The Broken Statue*

Clank...Clank. Clank.

“I’ve hit something!” exclaimed a sturdy young man as he leaned on his shovel.

“Be careful,” I said. “Let me have a look.”

I must have been a sight on that blazing hot day, waddling on my old bowlegs to get a look at a piece of history many thought lost.

The hole, about three foot long and two foot wide, angled into the earth almost two more feet. Reddish-brown dirt partially covered the creamy-white treasure trapped in its earthen tomb.

With a grunt, then a groan, I knelt for a closer look. “It could be?” I gasped almost talking to myself.

WHAT POINT OF VIEW IS USED?

From *Mimosa Lane*

Life teetered on the brink of despair for Rachel. Cowering in a miserable shack hidden in a thick forest, the young girl listened to the biting north wind howl outside the drafty walls. The remote location of the cabin, the bitter cold, and a life she did not choose imprisoned her in desolation.

“What am I going to do—what can I do?” the frightened girl lamented to herself as she stared out the window with a numb gaze.

Rachel could hardly comprehend how she arrived at her present condition. She did not have the time or energy to think about the past, however, as her life focused on the most basic need now—survival. Married to a man she could not love and did not really know, the thirteen-year-old Rachel looked at a winter landscape that seemed dire and hopeless. She clutched her only real possession in the world, a worn family Bible from a place she knew only as Mimosa Lane.

WHAT POINT OF VIEW IS USED?

From *Brothers of the Cross Timber*

“Ya’ think he’s asleep?” I asked peering across the moonlit field.

“Must be,” Arty Martin replied crouching next to me in the tall grass, while katydids and tree frogs sang from the thick woods behind us.

“What do you think, Lance?” I whispered to my other friend Lance Carrington.

A warm breeze whistled through the muggy air as Lance smiled reassuringly and said, “Patience, Gill.”

“I don’t know what you got against old Haskell?” Arty muttered as we waited restlessly in the shadows.

Lance did not respond, but we knew the reason. This farm once belonged to Lance’s mother and he resented Haskell Holiday owning it.

Moonlight glimmered off ripened watermelons, as we watched the amber flicker of an oil lamp from the farmhouse across the darkened field. Another fifteen minutes in the quiet darkness seemed like an hour, when suddenly the distant light vanished.

WHAT POINT OF VIEW IS USED?

From *Guilt's Echo*

“Sun’s up,” Samantha Harvey’s elderly father coaxed. “The cow won’t milk herself.”

Samantha cuddled in a soft quilt made by her mother as a cool breeze drifted through the small house. The colorful blanket caused strong emotions in the young woman each morning; a reminder her loving mother was gone.

The past year had been difficult. Besides losing her mother, Samantha struggled to adjust to a new home. The drowsy girl wanted to sink into the soft feather bed and forget her troubles, but she knew her feeble father needed her help with the daily chores.

“Samantha!” her father patiently called again. “Are you up, yet?”

Pretending to be alert, Samantha replied in a chipper voice, “Yes, Papa.”

WHAT POINT OF VIEW IS USED?

From *The Beast of Chatsworth*

A fine drizzle shrouds the Chatsworth moors with a dark and foreboding glow. The night amplifies every noise into something gothic. The young woman can see no more than a hundred steps. A maniacal howl echoes somewhere in the night causing her to freeze in fear. She thinks of retreating to town, but with only a few hundred yards to her destination she presses on urgently. Her quick walk evolves to a fast trot before she drops her package and runs through the night. A second sound pierces the darkness. The growl of the beast harmonizes with the shrieks of a man, whose yelp is quickly extinguished in a morbid groan of death.

Out of the corner of her eye, she sees the shadow of the beast: a hybrid monstrosity part hound, part ape, and part lion. It seems to raise on its hind feet like a man, but this is no man. Its cackling growl mocks her. The beast's broad head frames evil looking fangs, which she imagines drip with the man's blood. The crying girl runs hysterically toward the village of Pilsley believing she will be devoured by the monster with each step.

My Uncle, Lewis Abernathy, shared this story with us on the first night of our voyage and the imagery caused me to look forward to our destination with equal parts curiosity and dread. I've snuck out of my cabin and onto the foredeck to watch our traveling companion, Byron Lattimore, a legendary lawman from the Osage Hills of Oklahoma. He's more of a mystery to me than my uncle's stories. Byron leans on the rail of our ocean liner, staring at the murky, frothing water below. I watch silently from the shadows. Byron's dark enquiring eyes, black hair, and strong, square jaw give him a menacing, dangerous aura and an unmistakable air of confidence. He has an easy smile, but rations it carefully.

WHAT POINT OF VIEW IS USED?

Stages of Writing a Novel

- Idea or Imagination
 - A visualization of the story
- Drafting
 - Developing major plot elements, characters, setting etc.
- Editing
 - Grammar check
 - Style check
- Rewrite
 - Altering plot elements
 - Polishing characters
- Re-editing
- Re-rewrite
- Final Draft



Things to Remember

Be:

- Clear
- Concise
- Correct