SMART™ Lesson
Analyzing Narrative Perspective

When we read a piece of literature, the narrative perspective is a key element to analyze. It is the way the story is told and can greatly impact our understanding of the events, characters, and overall theme of the work. There are three main types of narrative perspective:

1. First Person
2. Second Person
3. Third Person

First Person Perspective

In first person perspective, the narrator is a character within the story who is telling the events from their own point of view using "I" and "me" pronouns. This allows us to get very close to the thoughts and feelings of the narrator, but also means that their account could be biased or unreliable. Examples of first person perspective include:

- The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger
- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Second Person Perspective

In second person perspective, the narrator is directly addressing the reader using "you" pronouns. This is less common in literature, but can create a sense of immediacy and personal involvement in the story. An example of second person perspective is:

- Bright Lights, Big City by Jay McInerney

Third Person Perspective

In third person perspective, the narrator is an observer who is not a character in the story. They use "he," "she," "it," or "they" pronouns to refer to the characters. This perspective can give a more objective and comprehensive view of the events, but we may not get as close to the characters' inner thoughts and feelings. There are two types of third person perspective:

1. Limited Omniscient: This type of third person perspective allows us to see the story through the eyes of one character. We only have access to their thoughts and feelings. Examples of limited omniscient perspective include:
   - The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

- The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
2. Omniscient: This type of third person perspective allows us to see the thoughts and feelings of all characters in the story. The narrator has a God-like perspective and can see everything that is happening. Examples of omniscient perspective include:
    - Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
    - Lord of the Flies by William Golding

Worksheet Questions

1. What is narrative perspective?
2. List the three main types of narrative perspective.
3. What is the first person perspective? Give an example of a book that is written in first person perspective.
4. What is the second person perspective? Give an example of a book that is written in second person perspective.
5. What is the third person perspective? List the two types of third person perspective and give an example of a book that uses each type.
6. How does the narrative perspective impact our understanding of the story?
7. Do you prefer reading books that use a certain narrative perspective? Why?