

# Boost Free Lessons - Year 10 English

## Lesson 11: Reading Prose Fiction: Narrative Perspective

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the extract below carefully. The line numbers will help you refer to specific parts of the text in your answers.

### The Second Interview

1 Dana had told the story eleven times by then, and it had worn smooth in  
2 the way things do. She knew where the pauses went. She knew which detail  
3 made people lean forward and which one made them look at their hands.

4  
5 The lawyer wrote nothing down for the first four minutes.

6  
7 "And the car was already there when you arrived."

8  
9 "Yes."

10  
11 "You said last time it arrived while you were waiting."

12  
13 Dana heard herself say that she must have misspoken, and heard how it  
14 sounded, and could not tell any more whether she had misspoken the first  
15 time or was misspeaking now. Eleven tellings. Somewhere in there the  
16 story had stopped being a thing she remembered and become a thing she  
17 knew, which is not the same, and she had not noticed the moment it  
18 changed.

19  
20 "Take your time," the lawyer said, and wrote something down.

21  
22 Through the window Dana could see the car park, and a woman folding a  
23 pram one-handed while holding a child on her hip, and she thought: that  
24 is a person who has done that four hundred times and does not think about  
25 it at all. Then she thought about how she had come to be watching a  
26 stranger fold a pram instead of answering, and how long the pause had  
27 gone on, and that the lawyer had not repeated the question.

28  
29 "It was already there," she said.

30  
31 She was almost sure.



### Worked Example 1

**How does the narrative perspective control what the reader knows?**

1. This is **third person limited**, following Dana closely without entering anyone else.
2. The reader shares her uncertainty in lines 13 to 18, but never learns what actually happened.
3. Crucially the reader also cannot see the lawyer's thoughts, only that he writes at particular moments.
4. This produces tension: the reader is close enough to doubt Dana, but not close enough to resolve the doubt.

**Model:** The third person limited perspective keeps the reader inside Dana's uncertainty while withholding both the truth and the lawyer's reading of her, so the reader can doubt her without being able to settle the question.

**Remember:** In **third person limited**, ask what the perspective **withholds** as well as what it reveals. Characters outside the focaliser can only be read through their actions.



**Question 1:** Answer the following questions. Give the line numbers you used in your answers.

1. How many times has Dana told the story?

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2. For how long does the lawyer write nothing?

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3. What did Dana say last time about the car?

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4. What can Dana see through the window?

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5. What does the lawyer say when she pauses?

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6. What is the final sentence of the extract?

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**Question 2:** Answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. Explain what the phrase about the story wearing smooth suggests.

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2. Explain the distinction Dana draws between remembering and knowing.

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3. Why does the writer tell us the lawyer writes something down at that particular moment?

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4. What is the effect of the passage about the woman and the pram?

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5. Is Dana lying? Use evidence from the extract to support your answer.

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**Answers and Model Responses:** Reading Prose Fiction: Narrative Perspective**Question 1**

1. Eleven times.
2. The first four minutes.
3. That it arrived while she was waiting.
4. The car park, and a woman folding a pram one-handed while holding a child.
5. *Take your time.*
6. *She was almost sure.*

**Question 2**

1. Model: Something worn smooth has lost its edges through repeated handling. It suggests the story has become polished and easy to tell, but also that the rough, specific details which made it true have been rubbed away.
2. Model: Remembering means retrieving an experience directly. Knowing means reciting an account she has learned. Dana recognises that repetition has replaced her memory with a version of it, and the frightening part is that she cannot identify when the substitution happened, which means she can no longer verify her own account.
3. Model: He writes only after the contradiction, which tells the reader he has registered it as significant. Because the reader cannot access his thoughts, the action is all they have, and it confirms the inconsistency matters without stating so.
4. Model: It shows Dana's attention escaping the interview entirely, which conveys her distress more effectively than any description of it would. The contrast is pointed: the woman performs a complex action without thinking, while Dana cannot perform the simple act of recalling one detail. It also lets the reader feel the length of her pause, since the digression takes as long to read as the silence takes to occur.
5. Model: The extract deliberately refuses to settle this. She contradicts her earlier account, and her final answer is undercut by *She was almost sure*, which suggests she is not deliberately deceiving anyone. The more troubling reading is that she no longer has access to the truth herself, which the passage about remembering and knowing sets up. The perspective allows the reader to see her doubt without seeing the event, so certainty is withheld from both.

