

Boost Free Lessons - Year 8 English

Lesson 6: Positioning the Reader

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

How does the writer position the reader in the sentence below?

Like most of us, you have probably wondered why the fees keep rising.

1. **Positioning** means guiding the reader towards a particular attitude or viewpoint.
2. *You* speaks directly to the reader and makes the issue personal.
3. *Like most of us* assumes the reader already belongs to the group, and creates inclusion.
4. *Probably wondered* assumes the reader already agrees, which makes disagreeing feel like breaking from the group.

Direct address and inclusive language position the reader as already sharing the writer's concern.

Worked Example 2

How does point of view position the reader here?

From the roof, the crowd below looked less like people than like a single restless animal.

1. The reader is placed **above** the crowd, sharing the observer's physical position.
2. That distance makes the crowd seem impersonal, since individuals cannot be seen.
3. The animal metaphor extends this, presenting the crowd as unpredictable rather than human.
4. So the reader is positioned to feel separate from the crowd, and slightly wary of it.

The elevated viewpoint and the animal metaphor position the reader as detached from the crowd and wary of it.

Remember: Writers position readers through **direct address**, **inclusive language**, **word choice** and **point of view**. Ask what attitude the text assumes you already hold.



Question 1: Write whether each sentence **positions** the reader or is **neutral**.

1. We all know the system is broken.

2. The system has been criticised by some observers.

3. Surely nobody would defend this decision.

4. The decision has both supporters and critics.

5. Our children deserve better.

6. Enrolments fell by four per cent.

7. You cannot have failed to notice the queues.

8. Waiting times were recorded over six months.



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The plans arrived in our letterboxes on a Friday afternoon. By Monday the old fig at the end of our street had been bulldozed. Mrs Halloran, who has lived at number nine for fifty-one years, watched it go from her front step.

1. Find one example of inclusive language and explain its effect.

2. Whose point of view is the passage written from?

3. How does the writer make the reader sympathise with the residents?

4. Find one word that positions the reader against the developer.

5. Rewrite the first sentence so the reader is positioned neutrally.



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write a sentence that positions a reader to sympathise with a character.

2. Rewrite it to position the reader against the same character.

3. Explain how point of view can position a reader without any opinion being stated.

4. Why is it useful to notice when a text is positioning you?





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Answers and Model Responses: Positioning the Reader**Question 1**

1. Positioning
2. Neutral
3. Positioning
4. Neutral
5. Positioning
6. Neutral
7. Positioning
8. Neutral

Question 2

1. Model: *our street*, which invites the reader to feel part of the community affected.
2. The residents of the street, and the writer speaks as one of them.
3. By describing the specific human cost, such as the elderly neighbour, rather than only the planning issue.
4. Model: *bulldozed*, which suggests force and disregard.
5. Model: A development application has been lodged for the site at the end of the street.

Question 3

1. Model response: She had queued since dawn, and the officer did not look up as he told her the office was closing.
2. Model response: She had pushed to the front of the queue, and the officer kept his patience as he explained the office was closing.
3. Choosing whose eyes we see through decides what we know and what we sympathise with, so the reader takes on that character's understanding without being told what to think.
4. Recognising positioning lets you separate the facts from the attitude you are being invited to adopt, so you can judge the argument for yourself.

