

Lesson unit plan 3: Art Competition. Planning their composition: Using point of view to bring pictures to life

Outcome: Children create thumbnail sketches to plan their competition entry composition.

Purpose: BIG Book Award 2026 Art Competition.

Audience: The Art Competition Judging Panel will be made up of representatives of The Arts Society, Shrewsbury.

Introduction Activity 1

Using Point of View to Bring Story Landscapes to Life

Why point of view matters

The angle you choose — looking up, looking down, close-up, far away — changes the entire feeling of a painting. It tells the viewer:

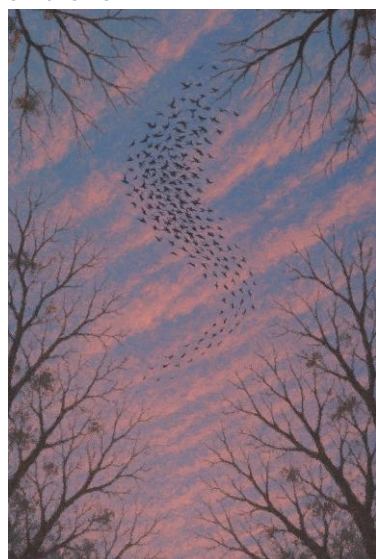
- Whose eyes we are seeing through
- What matters most in this moment
- How the character feels in the scene

This is exactly what you want children to connect with when painting from a story.

Below are 5 points of view they could consider. Show examples and discuss reasons for choosing them and the effect on the viewer. Depending upon your class's attention span, it may not be appropriate to look at them all individually. If this is the case, the children could look at one in a small group or with a partner and then share their ideas with the class.

Example from *Wildlands* (Brogen Murphy)

She could see the sky through the branches above her, streaked with pink. A flock of birds were wheeling and turning, a giant shape that broke apart and remade itself over and over.



This line invites a looking-up perspective — Astrid lying on the forest floor, the canopy framing the sky, birds swirling overhead.

What this point of view does:

- Makes the viewer feel small, like Astrid
- Emphasises the height of the trees
- Creates drama in the sky
- Suggests vulnerability, awe, or wonder

How pupils might paint it:

- Darker greens and browns around the edges (tree trunks, branches)
- A bright, open sky in the centre
- Birds as silhouettes, small but dynamic
- Branches reaching inward like a natural frame

This is a brilliant way to show children how perspective = emotion.

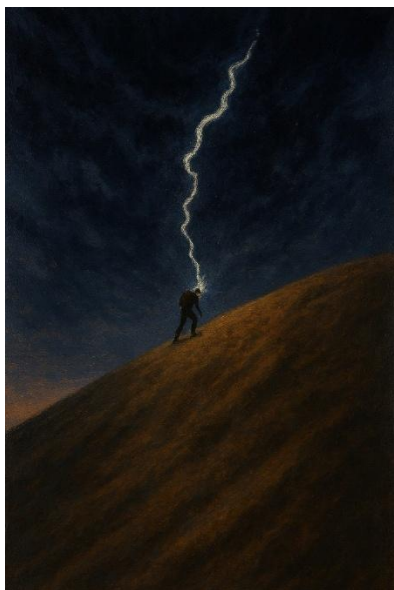
Ways to Use Point of View Across All Book Award Stories

1. Looking Up

Perfect for scenes involving:

- Tall trees
- Towers or cliffs
- Birds, magic, or sky events
- Characters feeling small, overwhelmed, or amazed

Effect: Makes the world feel big and the character small.

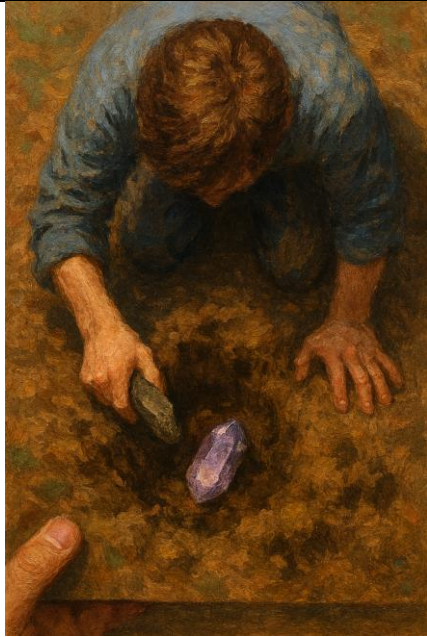


2. Looking Down

Useful when:

- A character is high up (hill, rooftop, cliff)
- They're surveying a landscape
- They're in control or seeing danger below

Effect: Creates power, distance, or tension.



The crystal is easily retrieved. I get on my hands and knees, find a sharp rock and begin to dig up the grave.

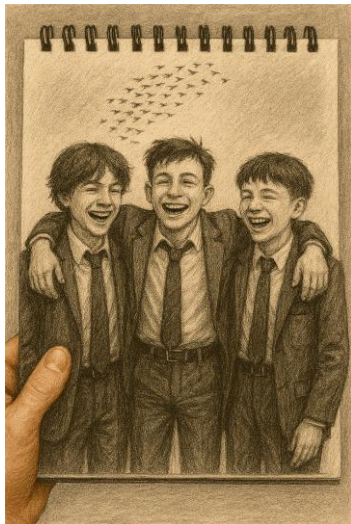
p38 *Grimstink* (Daniel Peak)

3. Eye-Level (Straight Ahead)

Great for:

- Paths leading into the distance
- Forests, streets, rivers
- Calm, steady scenes

Effect: Feels natural and balanced



*He holds up his sketchbook
And there's a picture of the three of us,
Proper oversized sleeves on the blazers,
Arms around each other laughing.*

p93 *The First Year* (Matt Goodfellow)

4. Close-Up Foreground Object

Links beautifully with your earlier idea about key objects.

Examples:

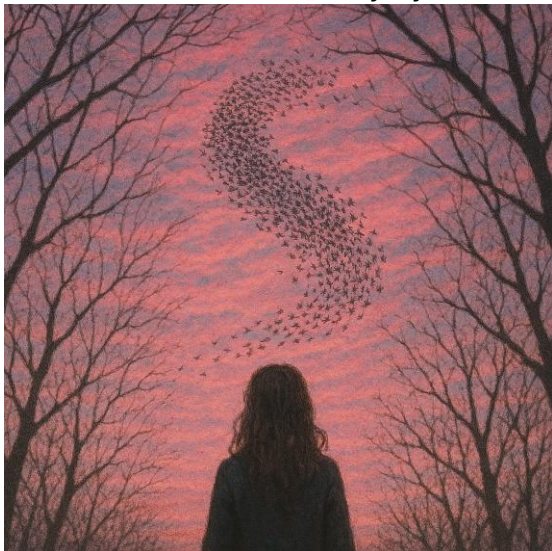
- The lamp in *Relic Hamilton: Genie Hunters*
- A compass, feather, magical stone, or clue from another story

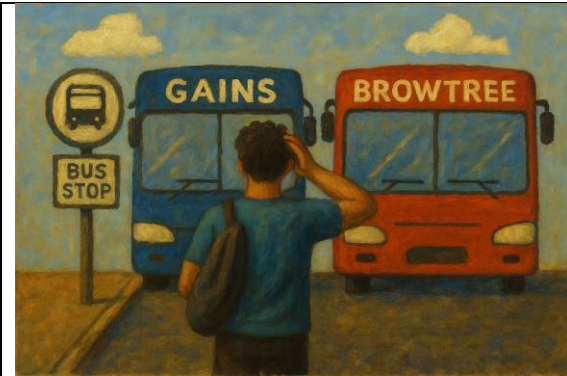
Effect: The object dominates the scene and becomes the emotional anchor.



5. Over-the-Shoulder View

Children love this once they try it.





The Boy with Big Decisions (Helen Rutter): *If you think I should get on the Gains bus turn to p23.*

If you think I should put the jumper on and get on the Browtree bus turn to p41.

Works well when:

- A character is entering a new place
- They're watching something happen
- They're about to make a decision

Effect: Makes the viewer feel part of the story.

Activity: Helping Children Choose Their Point of View

Use prompts like:

- Where is the character standing (or lying, or hiding)?
- What can they see from that position?
- What do you want the viewer to notice first?
- How do you want the viewer to feel?

Then encourage them to sketch three tiny thumbnails from different angles before choosing one.

Success Criteria for Using Point of View

- I chose a point of view that matches the moment in the story.
- I used size, angle and placement to show what the character can see.
- I made important objects larger or closer to the viewer.
- I used colour fading and scale to show distance.
- I can explain why I chose this point of view and how it links to the text.