

WTheck is Hybrid Narration?

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<http://greatstorybook.com/wtheck-hybrid-narration/>

This entry is part 8 of 8 in the series [Narrative](#)

[Narrative](#)

- [How to Write First Person Narrative](#)
- [How to Write Second Person Narrative](#)
- [WTheck is this Narrative Technique called Leitwortstil?](#)
- [WTheck is this Narrative Technique called Chekhov's Gun?](#)
- [WTheck is this Narrative Technique Called Eucatastrophe?](#)
- [How to Write Third Person Narrative](#)
- [WTheck is a Verse Novel?](#)
- WTheck is Hybrid Narration?

You may have heard of Alternating Narration – but what then is Hybrid Narration? They're not the same.

Narration is one of the most important aspects of writing we ever tackle. Unfortunately, it's also one of those things that is most overlooked.

Yet it's probably the most important thing you as a writer need to do really well - because this is how you establish the all-elusive Writing Style.

About Writing Style

Agents want to find it, publishers want to sell it. Writers need it. But how do you get it? Writing Style is the Golden Thingamajig that we all need to have, somehow.

I remember in college when I took what was the most awful creative writing class of my life, the professor told us that Writing Style is the most important thing - and the most elusive thing - that a writer must establish. About this, she was right.

She also said that nobody really knows how to do that, and that it's just one of those mysterious things a person either has, or doesn't have. I disagree.

The way great writers distinguish their style from that of everyone else has to do with narration. Narration is how you as the writer get your soul onto the page - even if you are not in the story itself (as an Author Surrogate, for example).

If you want to establish a unique writing style, then you need to *be conscientious about how you narrate* your stories. Not that they should all be identical - but they should absolutely belong together (especially within a series).

What You'll Get Here:

- Definition of Alternating Narration
- Definition of Hybrid Narration
- Why use Hybrid Narration - ever?

What is Alternating Narration - EXACTLY?

Alternating Narration is when the perspective of the narration switches from one POV to another. This type of narrative form has been going on for quite some time. In the case of First Person Narrative, it might be necessary (or maybe just really cool) if we get to have different perspectives of the story.

This is most typically done as a chapter-by-chapter switch, so that each chapter gives us a different perspective.

Note: Alternating Narration must be written in one narrative mode.

Alternating Narration must be written either in First Person or Third Person (which is sometimes called Third Person Multiple POV). The restriction here is that you must choose one narrative mode and stick with it throughout the story: either First Person or Third Person.

What is Hybrid Narration & how does it differ from Alternating?

Hybrid Narration is similar to Alternating Narration – but it's more drastic.

Alternating Narration sticks with one kind of Narrative Mode. What changes is *which person*. In fact, you can even change from an Omnipotent Third Person Narrator to a Third Person Limited Narrator, which feels more personal. This is a special kind of Alternating Narration.

But with Hybrid Narration, you can even change Narrative Mode, moving from [Third Person](#) to [First Person](#) and likewise, between characters.

You could even switch to [Second Person](#) for a chapter or two – if that serves the story best. What you've got to be careful of here is ending up with a story that feels disjointed, or slapped together. If you choose Hybrid or Alternating Narration, you've got to be very attentive to form. Your story structure has to be amazing and the POV for each narrative must be distinct.

When to use Hybrid Narration

You might be wondering why anyone would ever decide to take this route. There are situations when Hybrid Narration, insane as it sounds, really is the best choice.

If you've established the protagonist as the narrator, what do you do if the sidekick has to veer off into a completely different direction? If these two key players must be separated for a while, what do you do then?

Well, you could go with Alternating Narration, no problem. That's certainly an option. **But what if you don't want the reader to have direct access into the mind of the sidekick?** (Remember: you're already in First Person. If you go with Alternating, you need to stick with First Person.)

If that's the case, you might really not want to write a First Person Narration for that other character's portion of the story. Going with Hybrid Narration is an excellent way to solve this problem.

A really great example of Hybrid Narration is with [Laurie R. King's](#) books about Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes. In this series, Mary Russell is the long-established key character. The stories are for the most part narrated by her, in First Person.

In later novels, Russell is separated from Holmes and they each experience their adventures apart from each other. When we (readers) are with Holmes, the narration is in Third Person. The switches are not jarring, they make perfect sense. That's Hybrid Narration.

- We are not allowed direct access into Sherlock's mind - which is probably best.
- When we're with Russell's character, we have her First Person thoughts and experiences.

Why not just stick with Third Person?

You might wonder why someone would go with one of these more difficult narration routes at all – I mean, why not just stick with Third Person Narration and call it a day? Many people consider Third Person to be sort of the standard, or the simplest go-to format.

Actually, it isn't. Third Person is deceptively simple, and for that reason it's the easiest to fail doing really well. Third Person is a type of narrative that is perhaps most flexible. Anything is possible – and that's the danger.

To read more about [Third Person Narration and the common pitfalls, go HERE](#).

Narrate with Intention, Find Your Style

One of the reasons why so many stories fall flat is because the narration is given far too little thought. **The thing is this: your writing style, the thing that defines you as a certain breed of writer, one that is unlike any other, is about how you tell the story - and that's narration.**

If your inner thoughts about a story aren't making it to the page that is most likely coming from a narration problem.

When you think of your narration as something that's as important as your main character, and you give it the same kind of attention, you will be able to conscientiously craft a story-telling style that is all your own – and you'll be able to repeat that successfully and intentionally.

Keep creating, no matter what.

This entry is part of the series

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