



# The Daily Snowman

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## ➔ Narrative Voice Advice from a Famous Author

About five weeks ago I composed [a post](#) on this very here blog about a *The New York Times* article explaining the influence of postmodern narrative techniques on contemporary sitcoms. I thought the article was astoundingly great. (The post written by me about the article was OK; I didn't have much to add because the article was so good.) This post was notable also because it drew a comment from [Ara 13](#), the second most famous person to ever comment on *The Daily Snowman*, according to [the two-year blogiversary post](#). Ara 13 is the author of *Drawers and Boots*, a book which was awarded the "Outstanding Book of the Year" prize from IPPY. Mr. 13 objects to the use of humor as a crutch, when it comes to narrative choices. I'll let him explain by quoting his comment:

I certainly appreciate the metafictional spins in comedies, but I have one gripe. Humor does not give writers a free pass to say anything without it being challenged.

We have corresponded very briefly about his thoughts on this topic, and Mr. 13 has been gracious enough to send me some advice on narrative voice. Without further ado, here is the narrative voice advice from a famous author, as promised in the title of this post:

### Five Tips for writers from Ara 13 on selecting Narrative Voice

1. Mindfully choose the tense to support the credibility desired of your narrator. Present tense offers greater reliability regarding depiction of events than a past-tense reflection, but an accurate assessment of the moral worth is mitigated in the present as the narrator doesn't yet have the mature perspective that comes with time.
2. Select first or third person to support the level of credibility desired for your narrator. First person allows for more uncertainty and fallibility. Third person better nears omniscience.
3. Deliberately determine the time, place, age, gender, and culture of narrator. This will save you from unintentional anachronisms and a headache of a rewrite.
4. Decide how to present internal dialogue so that your style is consistent. Consider using italics for thoughts, thus avoiding constantly writing "he thought."
5. Consider to what degree the narrator will address the reader, if any. Metaphors and similes already insert opinions in the form of a narrator's personal comparisons; decide if you will extend this subjectivity to a direct address of the reader.



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