

# Modes of **Third**-Person Narration

**Telling the Story**



# Dialogue and Narration

**Dialogue:** characters' "voices"

**Narration:** the narrator's voice

She said, "Hey, you!"

**We are interested in narration.**

# Third-Person Narration

Narrator tells “**his**” or “**her**” story.

Three Types of 3<sup>rd</sup>-Person:

1. Limited
2. Omniscient
3. Objective

# What's the Difference?



Are characters' **inner** thoughts narrated?

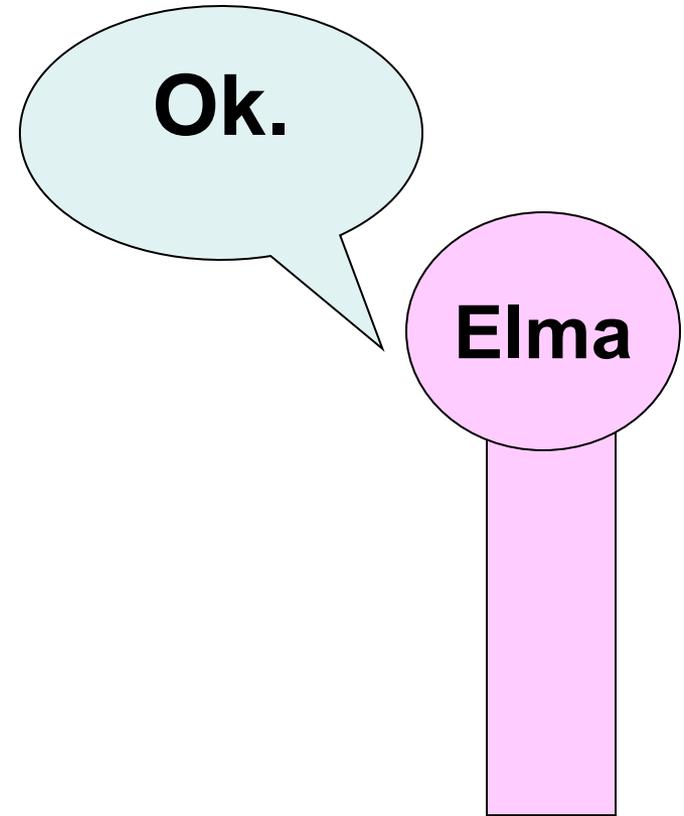
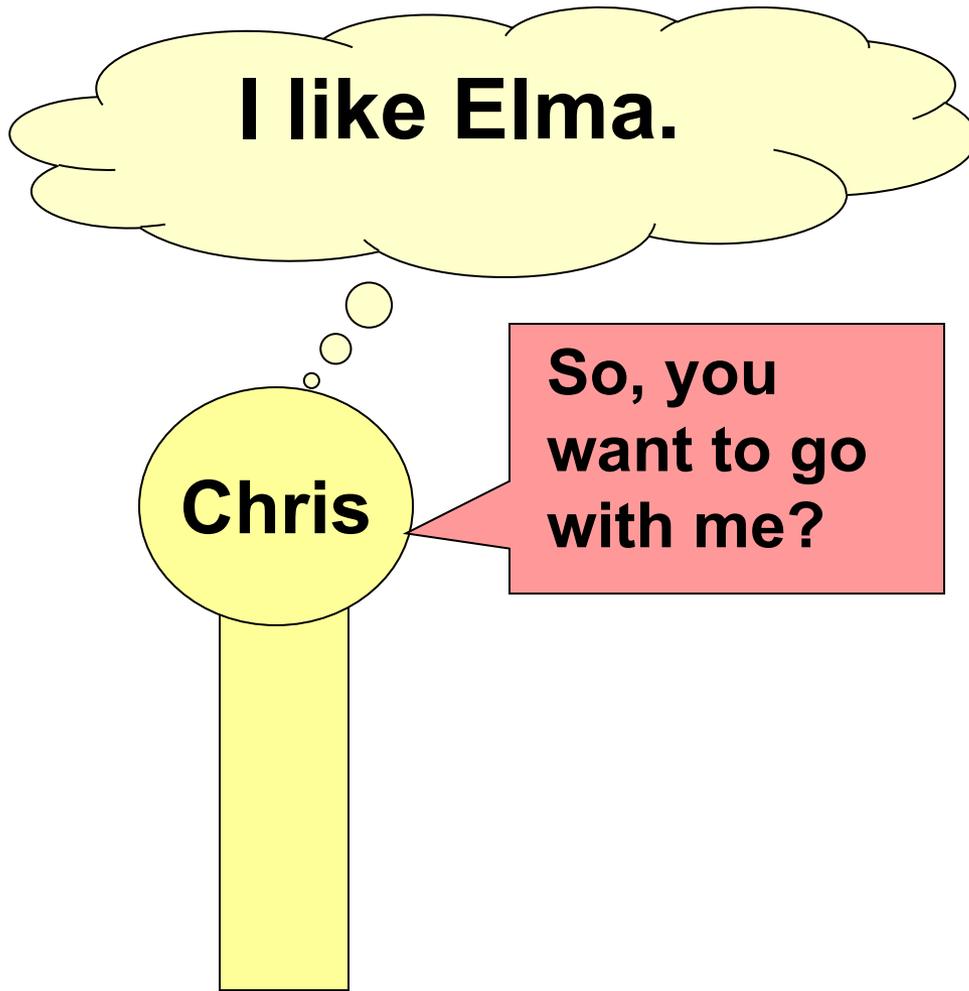
Does narrator reveal **thoughts** and **feelings**?

# 3<sup>rd</sup>-Person **Limited**

Narrator reveals thoughts and feelings of **one** character.

*Chris liked Elma since the third-grade, but he had never found the nerve to tell her. But one sunny day, Chris said to Elma, “So... you want to go with me?” Emma blushed and said, “Ok” Chris smiled.*

- Tells his **internal** thoughts
- Internal Narration is **limited** to Chris



**3<sup>rd</sup>-Person Limited:**  
**One character's thoughts.**

# 3<sup>rd</sup>-Person Omniscient

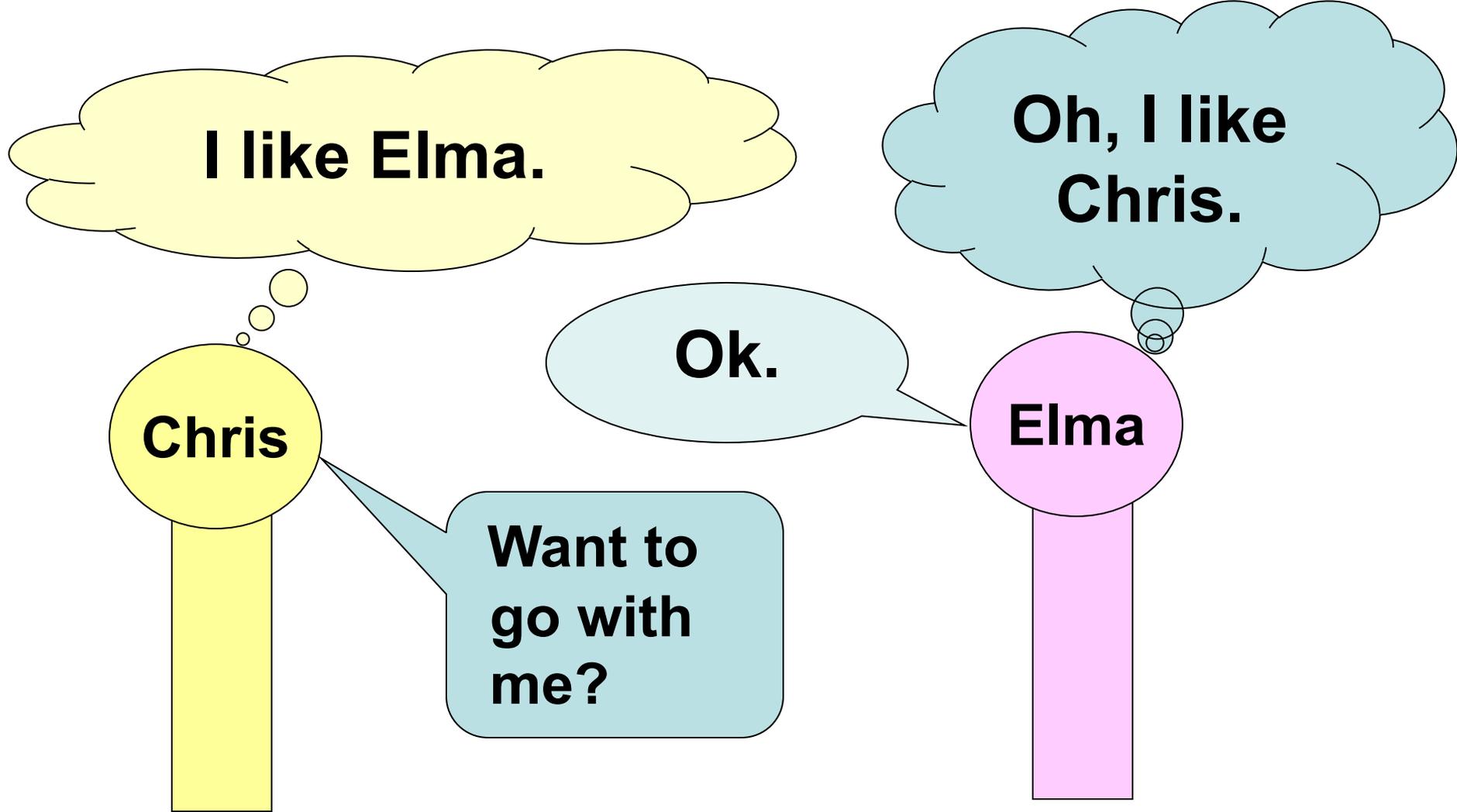
**Omni** = All

**Scient** = Knowing

**Omniscient** narrators tell more than one character's thoughts or feelings.

*Chris had liked Elma since the third-grade. Little did he know that Elma liked him too. They both admired one another from a far, and waited. One day, Chris said to Elma, "So... you want to go with me?" Emma felt her stomach sink. She couldn't believe it. Blushing, she said, "Ok." Chris smiled.*

**Omniscient** narrator is all-knowing.



**3<sup>rd</sup>-Person Omniscient:**

**Two or more characters' thoughts.**

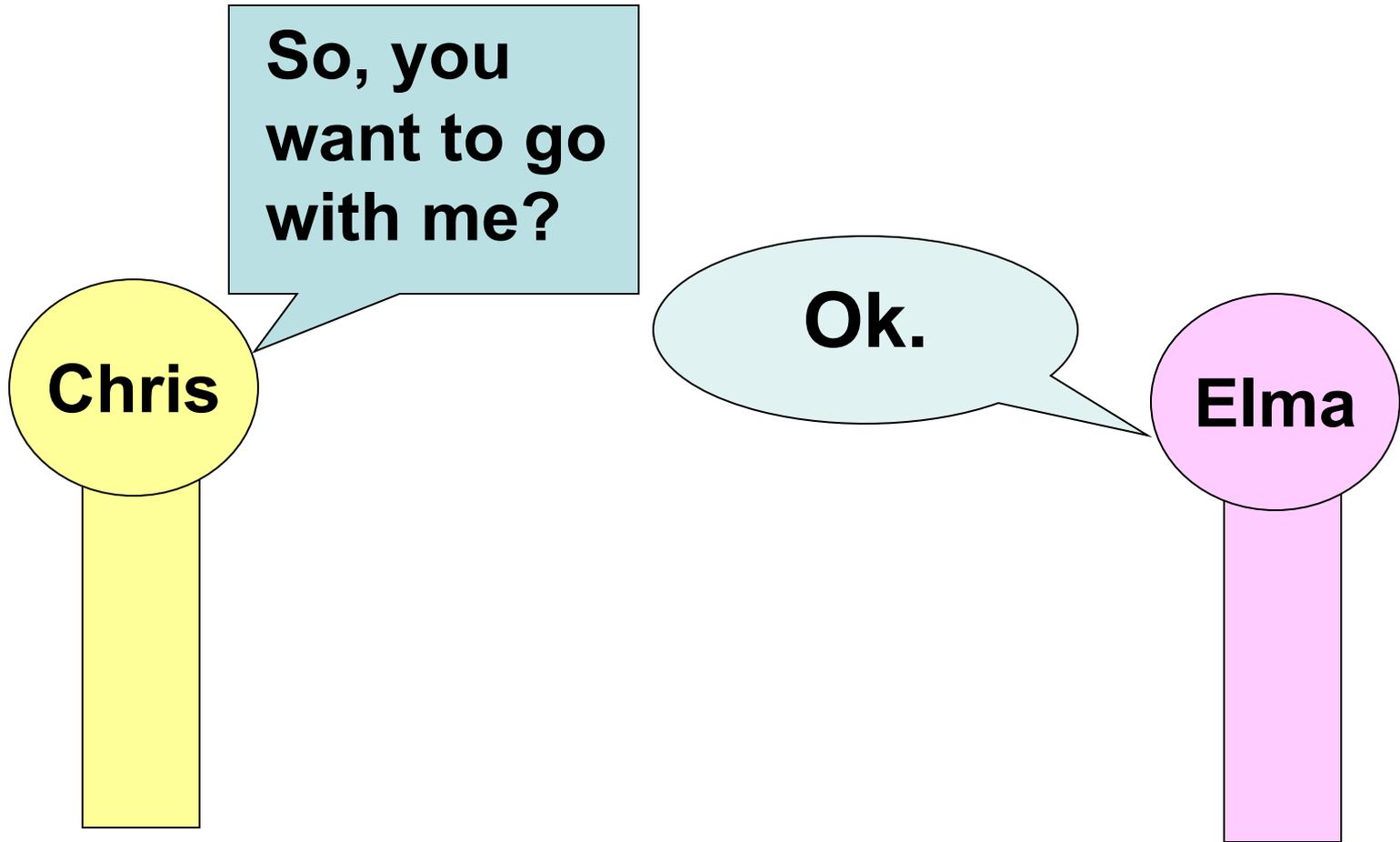
# 3<sup>rd</sup>-Person Objective

Internal thoughts are not told.

Readers may **INFER** thoughts and feelings based on **actions** or **dialogue**.

*Chris slowly walked up to Elma with his hands behind his back. “So... you want to go with me,” he said nervously. Elma blushed. “Ok.” Chris smiled.*

Characters' **internal** thoughts not narrated.



**3<sup>rd</sup>-Person Objective:**  
**No characters' thoughts.**

# Telling the Difference

1. Focus on the **narration**.
2. Circle any narrated thoughts or feelings.
3. Count each characters' thoughts.

**Only THIRD-PERSON has these modes.**

There is no first or second-person objective, omniscient, or limited narration.

# Signal **Words**

- **Knew**
- **Felt**
- **Contemplated**
- **Thought**
- **Understood**
- **Believed**
- **Reflected**

# Practice

1. **Read** each passage.
2. **Circle** characters' thoughts and feelings (as revealed by the narrator)
3. **Identify** the narrator's perspective (third-person objective, limited, etc.)
4. **Explain** your answer

# Example

Mr. Morton knew the students were running out of time, but he felt that he needed to give an example of the activity, so he did. One of his students raised his hand. “Yes?” Mr. Morton asked. “I know I’m going to have problems with this,” said the student. The student went on, “I mean, what about when characters reveal their thoughts through dialogue? Does that count?” Mr. Morton replied, “Not toward determining the narrator’s point of view.”