Interpreting Point of View

Learning the Skill

Suppose you are interested in seeing a new science fiction movie, but you are hearing mixed reviews from your friends. People often have different opinions about the same people, events, or issues because they look at them from different points of view. A point of view is a set of beliefs and values that affects a person’s opinion. Many factors affect an individual’s point of view, including age, gender, racial or ethnic background, economic class, and religion. To determine the accuracy of a statement, you must identify the speaker’s point of view.

To interpret point of view, follow these steps:

• Read the material to identify the general subject.
• Gather information about the author. Where and when did he or she live? What ethnicity or social class is he or she from?
• Identify aspects of the topic that the author chooses to emphasize or exclude.
• Look for emotionally charged words such as cruel, vicious, heartrending, and drastic.
• If you are still uncertain of an author’s point of view, read a selection on the same topic by another author with a different background. Comparing might make both points of view clear.

Practicing the Skill

Directions: Read the information below. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Blue Mosque in Istanbul

One of the most fabulous buildings in the world is the Blue Mosque in Istanbul. The Blue Mosque took seven years to build and was finished in 1616. It has six thin towers, called minarets, rising up to the sky. Graceful domes cover the main areas. The grounds have open courtyards with walkways through the green trees and bushes.

Like other Islamic religious buildings, the interior is filled with beautiful designs. The designs are made from ceramic tiles that form exquisitely intricate patterns. These patterns fill the surfaces of the columns, walls, and ceilings. When you look closely, the interwoven designs are magnificent. Chandeliers hang in the enormous main room. The domes rise hundreds of feet in the air. Many windows let the glow of light stream in to fill the room. The entire building feels like a fitting house of worship.
Critical Thinking Skills Activity
continued

1. **Identifying Points of View** What word in the first sentence gives you a clue regarding the author’s point of view about the Blue Mosque?

   

2. **Drawing Conclusions** What nationality and religion might you guess the author of this information to be?

   

✓ Applying the Skill

**Directions**: Read the information below, and then answer the questions that follow.

**Hamza El Din, Master Musician of the World**

Sadly, one of the world’s great master musicians passed away on May 22, 2006. His name was Hamza El Din, and he was 76 years old. El Din was born in Nubia, a region located in southern Egypt along the Nile River. He played the Nubian drum called the *tar*. However, El Din was best known for his brilliant playing on the *oud*, a string instrument similar to a lute or guitar, but more beautiful.

When the Egyptians built the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, it flooded El Din’s homeland. This tragedy caused him to make the decision to preserve and compose Nubian music. El Din sang in a mesmerizing voice.

He became known to American audiences in the 1960s, performed at the Newport Folk Festival in 1964 and made his first recording that same year. His recording, *Music of Nubia*, is still available today.

El Din spent most of the years after 1964 living in the San Francisco Bay Area and Japan. He continued enchanting audiences around the world, playing in many major concert halls until his death in 2006. Hamza El Din also composed gorgeous music for theater, dance, and films, including music for the soundtrack of *The Black Stallion*.

1. **Identifying Points of View** What is the author’s point of view about the *oud*?

2. **Describing** How would you describe the author’s point of view about the flooding of Nubia?

3. **Summarizing** What is the author’s point of view about Hamza El Din?