

# Balance

By  
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The first thing we learn when writing a fiction manuscript is that the key ingredient is having a fixed point of view. What most writers forget is that along with this, there must be balance in their presentation in order to interest not only the agents and/or publishers we submit to, but the reading public.

What I mean by balance is that each and every piece you write must have a balanced portion of narrative, description, and dialogue. To understand each of these concepts individually is not enough. A successful author must understand how to weave these three essential portions of their story into every scene. It may help if you study each technique for its contribution to your writing, and whether or not you are drawing on the full potential of them all. Take a look at each concept individually.

**Narration** is the vehicle by which an author sets the mood for the scene they are writing. Without knowing what time of day or what weather the characters are putting up with, how can we understand why they are reacting like they are? Without this element in our scene, the drama you are creating seeps off the page. But, be aware, if the author uses only, or primarily, narration in his work, the end result will be a fairytale-like story that carries slim chances of being published.

**Description**, an equally important ingredient in building a story, sets the background the characters work around, and it lets the reader see your characters. Have the character walk through a dark room, with only a penlight to illuminate his way. How spooky would the character's face look in the shadows cast by the weak light? The skillful use or omission of description in your writing can make or break a scene.

And then there is **Dialogue**. Dialogue is the vehicle that moves your story from page to page. If dialogue is not handled correctly, you can lose your audience when the first character speaks.

As William Noble says in *Conflict, Action and Suspense*,  
(A Writer's Digest book published in 1999) he states that  
dialogue is not conversation. Conversation is boring.

We, as writers, should avoid chit chat and include only key information in our dialogue.

So, it might be a good exercise to look through your current manuscript and see if you are using your skills to their fullest potential. Do pages of your manuscript resemble a script with primarily dialogue? Do you find a fairytale on your pages that only the young in heart can appreciate having read to them? Or is your story a full out description of the world in your head that would bore the most hungry reader?