

## **6 Skills to Look For in a Good Story-Telling Narrator**

There are many elements to excellent writing: compelling characters, a strong sense of place and a thrilling story to name just three.

However, without a good story-telling narrator to tie them all together, the story can fall flat.

A great narrator can help the reader lose themselves in a story, because, thanks to the power of their voice and acting talents they are able to conjure a mood, create a sense of place, evoke laughter, and bring the whole thing to life.

This is normally our job, of course.

Normally when we read words on a page, we do all of this ourselves. It feels like we are shooting a film in our own head.

Reading out loud is one of the most ancient of human traditions.

Some people believe that until the late Middle Ages, it was normal for most people to read out loud to themselves and that reading silently was the exception rather than the rule.

### **Qualities of a great story-telling narrator**

#### **1. They Enjoy What They are Doing**

We create the scenery, imagine how the characters look and build tension.

When a good book consumes you, it can make you lose all sense of time and what is going on around you.

The story transports you to somewhere else, and your everyday world is replaced by what's happening in front of you – if the narrator does a good job.

To ask a narrator to create all of this for you, and to replace the voice in your head with their own seems like quite a tall order. Especially because they need to convince not just you but everyone in the audience.

It should be obvious just from listening to them that they are enjoying telling the story.

If a narrator cannot enjoy the story they are reading, then it will be difficult for the reader to enjoy it as well.

No one wants to listen to an unenthusiastic fight scene. Great narrators can hold the audience under a spell, taking them on an emotional journey through the highs and lows of the tale. The narrator's enthusiasm is a big part of what brings it to life.

## **2. A Great Articulator**

When a narrator under-articulates their words, they can come across as lazy and unintelligent.

On the other hand, when someone over-articulates it can make the story sound unbelievable, stilted, and unnatural.

## **3. Knowing When to Use an Accent**

No one expects a one hundred percent accurate accent for every character, but when a character sounds believable, they have a better chance of selling the story to the audience.

A good narrator also knows when to drop accents altogether, because there are occasions when it can become distracting.

## **4. Intuitive Pacing**

A good actor knows when to hold a pause for an extra second to let the words sink in, and when to speed up dialogue during an action scene.

These little breaths and pauses add a human touch to the character or some spice to the description of a scene.

A natural speed can help a narrator immerse their audience in the story while making the characters feel more life-like.

## **5. Differentiating Characters**

A good narrator can make the audience feel a certain way by speaking about different characters. You might have a high pitch and normal volume to talk

about a 'good' character, whereas you may use a low pitch and loud volume for a 'bad' one.

## **6. The Consistent Narrative Voice**

Our ears are very good at picking up when something doesn't seem right, and they can quickly tell us when the narrator's heart isn't in it – so be ENTHUSIASTIC and set the scene.

It is the narrator's job to set the scene and build atmosphere and tension, so if their voice is the same all the time – how do the audience know what to feel?