

# Internal Monologue

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## Two Types of Interior Monologue

**Short interior monologue.** Tends to happen in the middle of a scene. Scenes are generally characterized by talk and action; don't destroy the pace with too many lengthy thoughts from the viewpoint character. Get just a line of thought here and there – enough to directly connect us to the viewpoint character's mind, but not enough to disrupt the flow of the scene. Clues about how the viewpoint character is feeling can be presented indirectly through words, actions, facial expressions, etc.

This type of monologue is generally italicized and not in quotes.

*I really wasn't expecting this*, he thought.

**Long interior monologue.** Tends to happen during slower bits in between action scenes when having direct access to the character's every thought for a few sentences or paragraphs, or even a few pages, is not a problem. Also, it's natural for a character to do the bulk of their thinking in between scenes.

## Two closely related literary terms:

- Stream of Consciousness. Entire novel, or at least large chunks, takes the form of the central character's thoughts. Such novels tend to be light on plot; not recommended. A good example is James Joyce's *Ulysses*.
- Soliloquy. Fictional character voices his or her thoughts out loud, as in Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech. Talking aloud to yourself at any length is frankly strange, so always keep any interior monologue unspoken unless you have a good reason not to.

## Breaking the Fourth Wall

This is a term from television and movies. It occurs when the character steps out of the scene and directly addresses the audience.