Writing Inner Monologues

Inner monologues are a great device to reveal unspoken things to the reader about your characters. This can be used in any narrative setting, be it omniscient or first person. How you use it varies on the narrator, but it can provide useful insights.

Main point 1	Where to use the inner monologue? There are many ways to utilise this device well within your story.
Image idea	Person beside a road sign with the sub-plot headers on it
Sub-point 1	Revealing Character Revealing a character's innermost thoughts or fears provides an additional insight for the reader. The reader will empathise more with a character when they see vulnerability.
Sub-point 2	To Provide Deeper Relationship Dynamics It provides an additional layer of personality for the character when used to describe a situation or person from that character's point of view. It can also be used to give the reader a plot advantage when used with third person/ omniscient narrators. The reader can see how multiple characters have interpreted a relationship or connection and become invested in all parties discovering the truth.
Sub-point 3	To Advance the Plot When using it to reveal character's private thoughts, it can also be used to show the evolution of that character as the story progresses. In terms of detective novels, it can be used to help the detective work out the clues to the crime alongside the reader In general fiction it can be used to see how the protagonist's mindset is slowly changing as we come towards the story's conclusion.
Notes	
Main point 2	Be wary of the pitfalls of the Inner monologue. If you are going to use it, make sure it is worth the reader's time – create descriptions of the characters from the eyes of the protagonist/ narrator, utilise it to build tension. It is also easy to overuse this device and turn it into an info dumping ground. You want to navigate away from giving too much away about the characters in one go.
Image idea	A person standing next to a mountain of words, with a reader squashed underneath
Sub-point 1	Bad example: "Lauren didn't like Boris. He was snooty and selfish." Good example: "Lauren's skin would crawl whenever Boris spoke. His self-serving attitude, his complete lack of social grace left her empty of any belief he was, in fact, human."

	Analysis: The good example shows the levels to which Lauren's feelings go towards Boris. It gives the reader a good understanding of the relationship dynamic as well as indicating how she will respond to him in future story scenes.
Sub-point 2	Bad example: "I had always been a troublemaker. From my first day in school, I looked to cause problems for everyone. I guess it was because I never got attention at home. I acted out so that someone would see me, even for bad reasons. I've never changed."
	Good example: "I wish I could stop needing to be seen by any means. But it's been so long I don't know how to change."
	Analysis: The good example gives us small insight into the character's desires and hopes to become better. There is chance for evolution, and gives the readers hope for the character. The indication of lifelong troublemaking is there without it being spelled out.
Sub-point 3	Bad example: "Tony grimaced. Frank was so ugly."
	Good example: "Tony grimaced as he watched his husband. Frank had become so ugly; twisted in his opinions. The happy, smiling man Tony had fallen in love with seemed to have disappeared, leaving only a bitter husk behind.
	Analysis: The bad example is too generic. "Ugly" is a word that can be used in many ways, it is not solely used for aesthetic descriptions. In this case, it was meant to describe Frank's personality, how his mind has changed over the years.
Main point 3	Inner Monologue Summary To recap, the inner monologue can be used strategically within your story.
Image idea	A completed jigsaw
Sub-point 1	Revealing Character. How could two different characters see a situation? **Example – meeting someone new:** A happy, friendly character: "Carl smiled and held out his hand, Joanie shook it, surprised by his grip. She knew she could trust him." Pessimistic/ 'moody' character: "Steven looked down at Carl's hand warily. It hung there, pale and expectant. Why did he need to greet people this way?"
Sub-point 2	Revealing Relationship Dynamics. How could two people in the same space handle a situation? **Example – Power Outage at the office** The boss: "Of course this happens today. Those reports need to be out of here ASAP. I can't people to write them out, how will I get them to head office?" The worker: "I can see them now, pacing in their office. We'll be asked to hand-write these reports, I just know it. It's not like we can say no though, is it?"

Sub-point 3	Progressing the Plot. How does your protagonist/ narrator grow?
	Example – Helping a rival
	"I never thought I'd see the day when I would smile at Simon. Let alone hear him say '*thank you*'. I guess it goes to show you don't really know what someone's going through until you're both going through it."