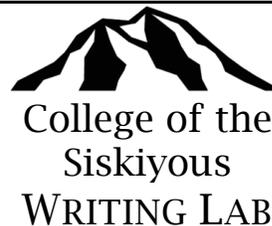


POINTS OF VIEW & FIRST PERSON & SECOND PERSON



INTRODUCTION: The point of view of a piece of writing is the perspective from which it is written: first person (*I* or *we*), second person (*you*), or third person (*he, she, it, one, they, or any noun*).

The *I* (or *we*) point of view, which emphasizes the writer, is a good choice for informal letters and writing based primarily on personal experiences. The *you* point of view, which emphasizes the reader, works well for giving advice or explaining how to do something. The Third-Person point of view, which emphasizes the subject, is appropriate in formal academic and professional writing. It is important that you, the writer, choose the appropriate point of view and stay with it.

When to use First Person Singular (*I*)

- In a **formal paper**, using the first person is acceptable, but refrain from being overly emotional or editorializing, and if possible, avoid using “*I*” all together.

Example: “*I was distraught after researching the crazy and cruel treatment of Native Americans in the eighteenth century.*”

Instead: “*In the eighteenth century, Native Americans were treated very unjustly.*”

- In **less formal structures** such as personal narratives and opinion papers, using “*I*” is acceptable and mostly encouraged; however, using “*I*” continuously can sound repetitive or too opinionated.

Example: “*I am convinced that I am the only one who believes that this war is wrong.*”

Instead: “*I believe this war could be peacefully resolved with minimal casualties.*”

- **General Guidelines**

Especially in formal papers, try to avoid using phrases such as “*I think....*,” “*In this paper, I will discuss....*,” and “*In the next section, I will talk about....*” These phrases can be redundant and distracting.

Example: “*In this paper, I will discuss how abortion is an immoral act against God.*”

Instead: “*To many pro-life activists, abortion is considered an immoral act against God.*”

Do not try to avoid using “*I*” and “*me*” by substituting “*we*” and “*our*.” Only kings, queens, and newspaper editors are allowed to use this pretense.

When to use Second Person Singular (You)

- In a **formal paper**, it is generally unacceptable to use the second person unless you are referring specifically to the reader.

Acceptable: *“Once you mix in the milk with the flour, you should stir briskly.”*

Unacceptable: *“If the death penalty is abolished, **you** would spend the rest of **your** life in jail.”*

Instead: *“If the death penalty is abolished, **prisoners** would remain in jail for the rest of **their** lives.”*

- If it is too difficult to avoid using the second person in your paper, try to limit the use of “you” as much as possible. For the reader, it is very redundant and changes the dynamic of the paper.

Example: *“If **you** pursue a career in writing, **you** will have fun, you will make decent money, and **you** might even get **your** work published.”*

Instead: *“Pursuing a career in writing can be enjoyable, profitable, and may lead to fame for the aspiring author.”*

- Be consistent with the “person” you use or point of view. For example, if you begin the paper using “one,” then that construction should remain constant throughout the paper.

Example: *“When one leaves the party, they should make sure nobody has been drinking.”*

Instead: *“When one leaves the party, he/she should make sure nobody has been drinking.”*

Example: *“If you have been drinking, one should refuse to drive drunk.”*

Instead: *“If you have been drinking, you should refuse to drive drunk.”*