

# *Point of View*

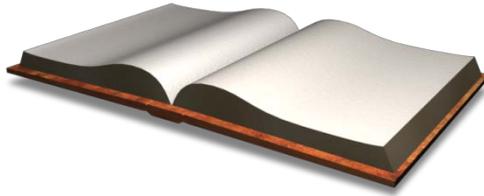
## **What Is Point of View?**

Point of View (also referred to as Person) is simply the writer's perspective.

As a writer, you should use different points of view in different situations. Keeping the following in mind will help you in choosing your Point of View.

- **1st Person** is used to indicate a personal experience, opinion, or evaluation.
- **2nd Person** is used to instruct or address the reader.
- **3rd Person** is used to generalize an experience or situation through an objective discussion.

In general, writing in **3rd Person** is the best option for academic writing, unless your assignment indicates otherwise.



## **Description of Persons**

### **First Person/Singular**

- I, me
- my, mine

### **First Person/Plural**

- we, our
- our, ours

### **Second Person/Singular**

- you
- your, yours

### **Second Person/Plural**

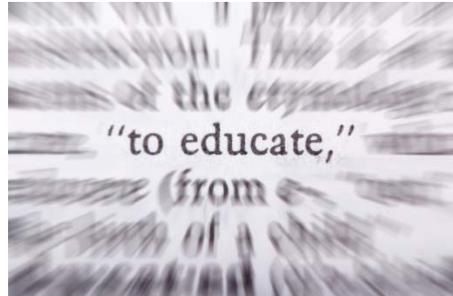
- you
- your, yours

### **Third Person/Singular**

- he, him, she, her, it
- his, her, hers, its

### **Third Person/Plural**

- they, them
- their, theirs



## **Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement**

The word or phrase that a pronoun refers to and replaces is called its antecedent. Pronouns must agree in both *number* and *person*.

### **Number**

Pronouns should be consistently singular or plural, depending on the number of the antecedent.

- **Singular:** *The **boy** was confused, so **he** asked for help.*
- **Plural:** *Because the **students** were confused, **they** did not complete **their** assignments.*

### **Person**

Pronouns must be in a consistent person throughout an entire sentence.

- **First Person:** ***I** wanted to finish **my** homework.*
- **Second Person:** ***You** should finish **your** homework.*
- **Third Person:** *When **one** completes the homework, **he** or **she** should turn it in.*



## Eliminating 2nd Person Writing

If a writer's purpose requires it, writing in 2nd Person can be acceptable in academic writing, but most often, writers use 2nd Person in an attempt to include large groups of people or speak generally. Unless, using 2nd Person is necessary and intentional, writers should avoid it.

In general, writers can effectively eliminate using 2nd Person by being specific, without addressing the reader. For example,

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1) When disciplining *your* children, *you* should never raise *your* voice.

**versus**

2) When disciplining *their* children, *parents* should never raise *their* voices.

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1) Considering all this, *you* can clearly see that wearing *your* seat belts at all times is best.

**versus**

2) Considering all this, *drivers* can clearly see that wearing *their* seat belts at all times is best.

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Also, be aware that beginning a sentence with a verb (a “command”) automatically puts it in 2nd Person. Although it is not directly stated, “you” is the implied subject.

1) (*You*) *Consider* these facts before making a decision.

**versus**

2) *Drivers* should consider these facts before making a decision.



## What Person Should I Write In?

As the author and the expert on your paper, this decision is ultimately yours, unless your instructor specifically directs you.

When making this decision, ask yourself, “*What is my purpose, and who is my audience?*”

Use **1st Person** if you intend to tell a personal narrative or write a reflective letter.

Use **2nd Person** if you intend to write a “How to” essay or write a cover letter to a resume.

Use **3rd Person** if you intend to tell a narrative objectively, present an argument or do a research paper.

**\* Please note that writing in 3rd Person is the best option for academic writing, unless your assignment permits otherwise.**

## **Sources**

“Pronouns.” *The OWL at Perdue*. 15

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