

Point of View.

There are three different points of view (also known as perspectives) a writer can use: **First Person**, **Second Person**, and **Third Person**.

First Person: Writers using the first person point of view write from their own point of view:

“I believe” “I think” “I saw”

To understand first person perspective, imagine you are telling your friend about your day.

Usually, when you tell someone about your own experiences, you use the first person perspective because it tells the reader what you thought, felt or did.

Second Person: Writers using second person point of view write from the reader’s point of view:

“You believe” “You think” “You saw”

To understand the second person perspective, imagine you are giving a speech to your classmates about how to bake a cake. Instructions are often given in the second person point of view because it tells the reader what to think, feel, or do. The second person can also be used when a writer is addressing a familiar audience.

Third Person: Writers using the third person point of view write from an anonymous observer’s point of view: “He/She believes” “The philosopher thinks” “The witness saw”

To understand third person perspective, imagine a camera that views what is going on around it: The camera cannot say, “I think this is good,” or “I think this is bad.” Also, it cannot say, “You think this is good,” or “You think this is bad.” The camera can only show what it records and allows the viewer (the reader) to form their own opinion.

Personal Pronouns for the three points of view:

A brief review of the subjective, objective and possessive case:

Pronouns are words like he, she and it that are used in place of a more specific noun already familiar to the reader. Pronouns are important because they are the main thing readers rely on to tell them what point of view the writer is using. Pronouns (and nouns) occur in three cases: the subjective, objective and possessive.

The subjective case is used when the noun (or the pronoun) is the subject of a sentence. It does the action.

The objective case is used when the noun (or pronoun) receives the action.

The possessive case shows ownership.

Remember: singular is one, plural is more than one.

	<u>Subjective</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Possessive</u>
First Person: Singular: Plural:	I we	me us	my/mine our/ours
Second Person: Singular: Plural:	you you	you you	your/yours you/yours
Third Person: Singular: Plural:	he/she/it they	him/her/it them	his/hers/its their

Pros and Cons of the three points of view:

First Person:

Pros: First person point of view relates personal information and personal experience. If you wanted to tell a friend about a good day you had this week, first person would be a good choice.

Cons: First person point of view relies on your, the writer's, opinion. It does not present information in an unbiased way. Remember, the reader may or may not agree with your personal opinion. It is better to use factual information and examples than to simply tell the reader what you believe and expect them to agree.

Overall: First person is good for relating personal experience and for giving colorful first-hand descriptions. However, it tends to be too biased and too personal for a formal paper.

Second Person:

Pros: Second person point of view puts the reader in the action, as if they were there. This feature of second person point of view is good for helping the reader relate directly to an experience.

Cons: Second person point of view sometimes forces an opinion on the reader. Second person point of view is usually not suited for formal writing because it is important to let the reader come to their own conclusion based upon the facts presented. Often, second person point of view can make the reader feel as if they are being given orders by a pushy writer.

Overall: Second person point of view is best suited to giving instructions or putting a reader in the action and making them feel as if they are experiencing something themselves. However, it tends to force opinion upon the reader and should be avoided in formal writing.

Third Person:

Pros: Third person point of view is the best point of view for formal writing because it is impersonal and does not force an opinion on the reader. Third person point of view often relies on fact, not opinion.

Cons: Third person can be less effective at helping the reader relate to emotional experience and, sometimes, can be a less entertaining choice. (However, it is possible to write a colorful, entertaining paper in the third person: Many authors use third person in fictional stories and poetry.)

Overall: Third person is the best choice for formal essays, and can be effective in creative or descriptive writing as well.

EXAMPLES:

FIRST PERSON:

I am about to write my first college essay. I am nervous and worried about the grade I will get. My stomach feels tight and twisted, but I will do the best I can.

SECOND PERSON:

You are about to write your first college essay. You are nervous and worried about the grade you will get. Your stomach feels tight and twisted, but you will do the best you can.

THIRD PERSON:

When writing their first college essay, many students feel nervous and worry about the grade they might get. Often, their stomachs feel tight and twisted, but they do the best they can.