

Using Appropriate Point of View (POV)

- ✓ The **point of view** in 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, or any noun)
- ✓ **Third-person** point of view, which emphasizes the subject, is appropriate in formal academic and professional writing.
 - **First-person** point of view is reserved generally for personal experiences/narratives or informal writing.
 - **Second-person** point of view is typically reserved for giving advice, explaining how to do something, or providing steps in a process directed to the reader.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS		
	Singular	Plural
First Person	I, me <i>my, mine</i>	we, us <i>our, ours</i>
Second Person	you <i>your, yours</i>	you <i>your, yours</i>
Third Person	he, she, it him, her <i>his, her, hers, its</i>	they, them <i>their, theirs</i>

Tips to Writing Appropriate POV

- 1) **Use 3rd-Person:** Formal academic and professional writing normally maintain a 3rd-person point of view, which emphasizes the subject. 1st-person—the *I* or *we*—point of view, which emphasizes the writer, is a good choice for informal letters and writing primarily based on personal experience. 2nd-person—the *you*—point of view, which emphasizes the reader, works for giving advice or explaining how to do something; it is generally avoided in academic writing unless instructed by a professor.
- 2) **Make point of view consistent in person and number:** Do not shift from 3rd-person to 1st or 2nd-person. Remember, person refers to the identity of the subject of a sentence and the point of view of the writer. Stay consistent in the use of pronouns to refer to 3rd-person. In the 3rd-person, the subject is the writer's topic of discussion, what the writer is informing the reader about in the paper. Number refers to the quantity (singular or plural) of a noun or pronoun.
- 3) **Pay attention to context:** Do not shift the point of view unless the meaning in a particular context makes it necessary. Occasionally, a shift may be required, depending on the purpose of the paper. If a shift is necessary, the context of the shift must be clear to the reader.
- 4) **Settle on an appropriate point of view:** Writers who have trouble sticking to a consistent point of view can shift confusingly from one to another, and, in doing so, distract the reader. The solution is to choose the suitable perspective and stay with it for the entire paper.

Examples of corrected POV provided on Page 2.

Examples of Corrected POV

Teenagers¹ today are very different from those of the past, especially when it comes to pastimes. **I**² spend many hours on the cell phone or playing video games. Teens of former years did not have such technologies to pass their time. **You**³ observe many teens who are attached to their devices. Young adults tend to spend the majority of their time connected to a phone, tablet, or computer. Furthermore, **teens**⁴ do not always pay attention to **his or her**⁴ length of time on a device, detaching from the “real” world. ⁵In the past, young people had less technology to keep them busy; instead, they were often spending time with friends, participating in extracurricular activities, or reading books. Now, teens spend much of their time posting to and viewing social media sites, watching videos, and playing video games. Today’s youth should stop spending so much time connected to a device; teens need to engage with others, enjoy an active social life, and participate in a productive community life, not virtual reality, so they can develop real-world social skills.

1. The writer began in **3rd-person point of view**, which made the writing formal and neutral.

2. The writer **shifted into 1st-person point of view**: “I spend...” Revise back to **3rd person**: “**They spend...**”

3. The writer **shifted into 2st-person point of view**: “You can...” Revise back to **3rd person**: “**People can...**”

4. The writer shifted in number: “**teens**” is plural, but “**his or her**” is singular. Revise pronoun to “**their length of time...**”

5. The writer does not require or make any shifts in POV based on context.