POINT OF VIEW (1ST, 2ND, & 3RD)

An article's "point of view" refers to the author's use of pronouns within his or her sentences. In English, point of view can be broken down into three primary categories: first-person, second-person, and third-person.

First-Person:

First-person point of view can be described as the author speaking from his or her own experience and including him or herself in the text itself. First-person is primarily used in informal, personal situations and is not recommended for scholarly writing. First-person pronouns include:

- I | Me | My | Mine | We | Us | Our | Ours

If your writing contains any of the pronouns above, it has been written in first-person.

Second-Person:

Second-person point of view can be described as the author speaking directly to the reader. Second-person is generally used only in very informal situations and most commonly appears in letters, directions, and recipes. Second-person pronouns include:

- You | Your | Yours

If your writing contains any of the three pronouns above, it has been written in second-person.

Third-Person:

Third-person point of view can be described as sentences constructed without the author or reader being directly addressed. Third-person is generally viewed as the strongest and most formal point of view, and most academic and professional writing is done in third-person. Third-person pronouns include:

- He | She | It | Him | Her | His | Hers | Its | They | Them | Their | Theirs

If your writing contains any of the pronouns above, it has been written in third-person.

Why Third-Person:

Third-person is considered the strongest point of view because of the limiting nature of both first and second-person. When using first-person, for instance, the writer adopts all that is said within the article as his or her own, which is generally unnecessary and limits the author's ability to remain—and appear—objective.

Second-person also weakens and limits an author's words because it creates a narrow audience. Once authors begin to use the second-person point of view, they establish a set of unstated assumptions about who is reading their work. If the actual reader does not fit inside of these assumptions, the reader is generally alienated—resulting in a loss of credibility for the author. Third-person, however, avoids these pitfalls and allows authors to present their work objectively while maintaining a large audience.

Practice Questions:

Below, you will find example sentences containing different points of view. Try to identify each point of view on your own before checking your answers at the bottom of this page.

1. I am hungry.
2. After the boy went to school, he walked across town to the toy store.
3. Make sure to clean the apartment before I get home today.
4. Isn't it great that our dog can do so many tricks?
5. Everyone in the audience waited silently for the film to begin.
6. The robot's circuits started to over-heat.
7. All of the kids seem so happy; they seem like they're having a great time.
8. My professor said that I will need to complete three extra-credit assignments in order to pass the class.
9. You're my best friend.
10. How long will it take for our lunch to be prepared?

Answers:

Below, you will find the answers to the practice questions listed above.

1. First-Person
2. Third-Person
3. Implied Second-Person & First-Person
4. First-Person
5. Third-Person
6. Third-Person
7. Third-Person
8. First-Person
9. Second-Person
10. First-Person