



*Illinois Valley Community College
Writing Center*

AVOIDING 1ST AND 2ND PERSON

Writing in third person is the preferred point of view for most academic situations.

FIRST PERSON—from the standpoint of the writer

Avoid the first person unless you are specifically asked to give personal examples or write about yourself.

I our me mine
we ours us my

Avoid phrases like “I think,” “I believe,” and “In my opinion” because they weaken your argument.

SECOND PERSON—addresses the reader

Avoid words like “you” and “your” because they are considered informal and can sound harsh. For example, writing “When you do not pay your taxes, you are cheating the government,” sounds accusatory.

you yours
your

THIRD PERSON—focuses on others or a subject

Revising to use the third person is often a good choice. For example, instead of writing, “You notice the irony in the story,” write, “The reader notices the irony in the story.”

he one her his their
she it him they theirs

Unless otherwise specified, rely on the third person.



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