

Point of View

When writing any document, a writer needs to consider from what point of view the document should be written. In writing, point of view is the voice in which the author chooses to tell the story. In college writing it is important to be consistent with a point of view throughout a document unless otherwise noted or okayed by the instructor.

Three points of view

First Person

First person point of view is commonly called the “I” or “we” viewpoint. The writer is the “I” in the document. Many novels or memoirs are written in the first person point of view because it emphasizes the writer or teller of the story. Typically, reflective or narrative assignments will be in the first person point of view. This is a more **casual or informal** point of view for writing.

Example: I waited for the city bus to be at my stop.

Example: We waited for the city bus to be at our stop.

Second Person

Second person point of view is told by using “you.” Using “you” puts importance on the relationship between the writer and the reader. Students should be very careful about using second person point of view because in most cases the relationship between the writer and the reader is not present or is not the focus. Most college instructors want a more formal tone.

Example: You waited for the city bus to be at your stop.

Third Person

There are a few varieties of third person but when writing in third person point of view the writer focuses on the information in the writing, not the writer. When writing in third person, a writer uses pronouns like he, she, they, and it. This point of view is commonly used for formal writings like argument, persuasion, informative, and report writing.

Example: They waited for the city bus to be at their stop.

Example: He waited for the city bus to be at his stop.

Example: She waited for the city bus to be at her stop.