

Grammar Worksheets: Consistent Point of View

<http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>

This worksheet discusses what English teachers call "point of view" and what some grammar and usage handbooks call "confusing shifts in point of view." Take a look at the following sentence.

Mixed Point of View: We were slowly getting closer to our destination, but you could see that everyone was getting frustrated.

There's really nothing confusing about this sentence; we know exactly what it means.

This sentence has a mixed point of view. The pronoun We is 1st person plural; the pronoun you is 2nd person; and if we really want to get fanatical, the pronoun everyone is 3rd person singular.

We frown upon this construction in standard written English. But it's not confusing – just wrong.

Definition: Point of view refers to the perspective from which the sentence is told. When we discuss point of view, we use a term called "person," meaning "who (or what) is the focus of the sentence." In English grammar we have three persons, 1st person, 2nd person, and 3rd person.

Note: We're not going to discuss number (whether a noun or pronoun is singular or plural). You can see another worksheet for that http://www.myquickgrammar.com/Lesson_Agreement_Pronoun_Antecedent.pdf. Let's just make sure that our nouns and pronouns are all singular or all plural, unless we specifically mean otherwise.

| | 1 st Per. | 2 nd Per. | 3 rd Person |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Singular | I | You | He, she, it, everyone, everybody, every student, James Thurber, Margaret Thatcher, every teacher,... |
| Plural | We | You | They, people, students, the French, soldiers,... |

Let's rewrite the sentence above using a consistent point of view. Just to be perfectly clear, we'll use a consistent 1st person and 3rd person point of view.

Consistent 1st Person Point of View: We were slowly getting closer to our destination, but we could see that we were getting frustrated.

Consistent 3rd Person Point of View: The Gomezes were slowly getting closer to their destination, but they could see that they were all getting frustrated.

These sentences may be consistent, but sometimes a rewording of the sentence may improve readability. For example,

The Gomezes were slowly getting closer to their destination, but they were getting frustrated.

This revision cuts four words and improves the flow of the sentence. Many times, this type of revision improves the readability of a sentence more than merely focusing on point of view.

What about 1st Person I or We? Use the pronouns I or we only when giving personal examples or when the focus of the sentence is clearly on the writer. Enough said.

What about 2nd Person You? **Do NOT use it. Ever.** Unless you're writing instructions, telling people what to do, or asking rhetorical questions, please **DO NOT** use you, your, yours, you're, or anything that sounds like you in academic writing.

Grammar Worksheets: Consistent Point of View

Exercises: Rewrite each sentence to eliminate any mixed point of view.

1. The author suggests that the truth is sometimes painful, but telling the truth is better than living a life being someone you are not.

2. When Margo married a widower her life became complicated because you can't help but feel jealous about a deceased wife.

3. Although it may be painful for a parent not to be your child's role model, Patrice Grant doesn't have the right to be angry with her son's choice.

4. As the soldiers marched away from the battleground, you felt as if the war may finally be over.

5. A softball player who wants to develop her pitching form knows you will develop more skills at a sleep away camp.

6. Students underestimate the amount of time required to study nursing because you simply cannot pass your tests without extensive study and practical experience.

7. Regardless of how much teachers try, you cannot make sure that students attend every class.

8. When I ran, you would get cramps.
