

Grammar Worksheets: Establishing a Strong Authorial Voice

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

This worksheet discusses techniques for communicating your opinion in what we call a strong authorial voice. This means that when you write, you should establish your position as the author and call on the reader to accept your credibility. Let's bring the abstraction down to an example.

Weak Authorial Voice: In my opinion, pedestrians should not cross the street when they have a red light.

Strong Authorial Voice: Pedestrians should not cross the street when they have a red light.

If you are writing an essay or report about traffic problems, readers know that YOU are the author, no one else. The phrase "In my opinion" takes away from the strength of your writing. It fills space without adding any content and, in fact, diminishes your credibility as a writer.

Certain phrases or expressions appear in our writing frequently, and all they do is clutter up the space and take away from the message.

In my opinion
It is my belief
I believe
I think
I feel
My belief
My thoughts on
It seems to me
It is my understanding
We believe

When you give your thoughts, beliefs, feelings, or opinions about a subject, you generally do not have to specify that those thoughts, beliefs, feelings, or opinions are yours.

Attribution is Sometimes Necessary. There are times when you write a letter, essay, report, or some other document where you discuss the beliefs or opinions of different people or organizations. In these cases, make sure you attribute (give credit to) the opinion to that particular source.

Example Where Attribution is Necessary: "Derek Bok argues that first amendment rights outweigh any concerns for offending the public's sensibilities, while Juliet Tabor contends that the risk of offending large segments of the population must be considered in determining what a newspaper should print."

If you follow this sentence with an opinion of your own, you do not need to attribute it to yourself. Own the opinion as yours and state it strongly.

Weak Authorial Voice: It seems to me that Juliet Tabor fails to take into account the spirit of hard-earned democratic freedoms by promoting censorship based on public perception.

Strong Authorial Voice: Juliet Tabor fails to take into account the spirit of hard-earned democratic freedoms by promoting censorship based on public perception.

Not only is the strong sentence shorter by five words (always a good thing), it carries the voice of authority and conviction.

Write with authority and conviction.

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Exercises: Rewrite each sentence to convey a strong authorial voice. You may modify each sentence in other ways to make it stronger.

1. I think that what this mother is trying to explain makes perfect sense.

2. It is my understanding that most men feel a bit emasculated when asked or forced to help complete tasks other than those classified acceptable by other men.

3. I strongly believe that high schools should do something about the harassment of students who are different from most other students.

4. I think Blomfield is incorrect in implying that people are judgmental if a man is unable to support his family due to unemployment.

5. In my opinion as I read Paturel's article, it seemed as if Paturel was the one who really needed to make peace with Brandon's first marriage.

6. Although people tend to feel they have to measure up to someone else's level to be accepted, I think people should just be themselves if they really want to be accepted.

7. I think that in our day and age that unemployment is a very common theme in America.

8. I can see why many homosexuals, like Roberts, tend to hide their sexuality from their family.
