

## How do I eliminate informal, first person pronouns from my essay writing?

"you"  
"your"  
"we"  
"I"  
"my"  
"our"  
"mine"  
etc.

These pronouns indicate "first person" and often suggest that the writer knows what the reader is thinking. This is a false assumption and does not belong in formal, academic writing.

### OPTION ONE: Change "you" to an appropriate plural word that refers to a group of people.

Original Sentence:  
New Sentence(s):

You should obey the traffic laws.

*Drivers should obey the traffic laws.*  
*Motorists should obey the traffic laws.*  
*People should obey the traffic laws.*  
*Individuals should obey the traffic laws.*  
*Citizens should obey the traffic laws.*

### OPTION TWO: Change "you" to the word "one". Use this method sparingly since it can sound silly if you have "one" all over your paper.

Original Sentence:  
New Sentence:

You could volunteer to perform community service.  
One could volunteer to perform community service.

### OPTION THREE: Change "you" to the word "he/she". Use this method sparingly since it can sound silly if you have "he/she" all over your paper.

Original Sentence:  
New Sentence:

I might close my bank account.  
A customer might close his/her bank account.

**OPTION FOUR: Completely reword the sentence!**  
**(This is one of the best options you have.)**

Original Sentence: **Our** nation is founded on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.  
New Sentence: **The United States** is founded on...

Original Sentence: **You** can understand characters by judging their appearance.  
New Sentence: **Characters** may be judged by their appearance.

Original Sentence: A busy schedule makes **you** want to get fast food since it is quick.  
New Sentence: Busy **students** find fast food convenient.

**Rewrite the following sentences using Formal English.  
Eliminate all first person pronouns!**

1. You can tell what the character is thinking due to first person viewpoint.
2. The dialogue helps us to understand the plot.
3. Have you ever noticed why people avoid sales calls?
4. When bills arrive, you wonder how you are going to pay for them.
5. You understand Mark Twain's theme after you read his short story.
6. School can better prepare you for the challenges you will face in the world.
7. Might our opinion reflect a negative attitude toward the government?
8. Are you wondering what kind of job you will seek after high school?
9. If your favorite hobby is socializing, you should be careful about gossip.
10. The illustrations help us to understand our thoughts about the story.
11. If we want to retire without worry, we must be sure to invest our money now.
12. If you want to write well, you must get rid of "you" in Formal English papers!