

1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD PERSON

To understand *person voice*, think about fictional stories you may have read. Does the author put himself or herself in the story or talk from the protagonist's perspective? Does the author ask you, the reader, to make decisions for a choose-your-own ending? Does the author state the events of the story objectively, remaining detached? These three variants stem from pronoun usage. In simplified terms, 1st person is the use of "I," 2nd person is the use of "you," and 3rd person is the use of "they." However, there are many more pronouns than that.

Mark Twain wrote *Huckleberry Finn* in the 1st person. Self-help books typically present 2nd person voice by telling the reader directly, "You should take this advice." However, 3rd person is most common in fiction and in academics. Tolkien, Lewis, and many other renowned authors have used this writing style.

PRONOUN CHART

Here is the breakdown of pronouns, dependent on person, case (the part of a sentence a noun serves as, such as subjective, objective, or possessive), and number (singular vs. plural). You will notice that, in English, the pronoun "you" is both singular and plural. The context of a given sentence or passage will reveal how the author uses it.

		Person Voice		
Case		1st	2nd	3rd
Singular	Subjective	I "I eat the food"	You "You eat the food"	He / she / it "It eats the food"
	Objective	Me "That bothers me"	You "That bothers you"	Him / her / it "That bothers him"
	Possessive	Mine (my) "The book is mine"	Yours (your) "The book is yours"	His / hers (her) / its "The book is hers"
Plural	Subjective	We "We eat the food"	You "You eat the food"	They "They eat the food"
	Objective	Us "That bothers us"	You "That bothers you"	Them "That bothers them"
	Possessive	Ours (our) "The book is ours"	Yours (your) "The book is yours"	Theirs (their) "The book is theirs"

Note: The versions in parentheses still carry that voice but are *adjectives* rather than pronouns (e.g. "that is *her* book").

PRACTICE NOW