

USING “I” IN YOUR PAPERS: KNOWING YOUR STANDPOINT



BEFORE USING “I”...

- Ask your instructor: Has your instructor said you can use “I” in your essay? If they haven’t talked about using “I,” you can reach out to your instructor and ask their preferences.
- Review the prompt: Does the prompt mention personal experience? If so, this might be a great time to use “I.”
- Think about your paper: What is the right amount of “I” for this paper? Is this a paper in which it would be appropriate to use “I” often? Is this a paper in which you should use “I” sparsely?

ADDING FLAVOR

- Adding “I” to a paper is like adding salt to a dish.
 - The right amount helps to add flavor.
 - Too much makes the dish uneatable



WHO ARE YOU? YOUR ETHOS. .

- When I write, I try to remember how my history and biases effect my perspective
 - I struggled with reading and math as a child
 - Now, I looooooove school, books, reading, writing, and learning.
 - I was praised by my family and teachers for being a good student.
 - I teach college writing and literature.
 - I was a first-generation college student.
 - College was exploration for me.
 - I went to a large state university.
 - I have only lived on the West coast
 - I read and write in English.





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- Who are you?
 - Make a list of what you'll bring to a conversation about what it means to be a college student. What are your assumptions, your background and experience, your knowledge and expertise? Be honest!

CONSIDER WRITING YOUR **STANDPOINT** INTO YOUR ESSAY (IF APPROPRIATE)

- ▶ Writing your standpoint into your essay can build trust with your readers. Even if they have a different standpoint, they will respect your honesty and, let's hope, listen respectfully to what you have to say.
- ▶ Writing in your standpoint can make your writing feel more authentic to you and your reader.

Even if you don't explicitly reveal your standpoint to your reader, you'll want to know your standpoint so that you are aware of your own implicit assumptions as you write.



HOW DO I WRITE IN MY STANDPOINT? CAN I USE “I”?

- “What concerns me as a business major. . .”
- “I write this essay during a time when. . .”
- “I am concerned about. . .”
- “Now, as a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, I. . .”
- “From my first day as a sociology professor at a university with a Division I football and men’s basketball team, education and athletics struck me as being inherently at odds” (Harris).
- “In this society, that norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure. It is within this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside. Those of us who stand outside that power, for any reason, often identify one way in which we are different, and we assume that quality to be the primary reason for all oppression” (Lorde 203).
- “I might not carry with me the feeling of my audience in stating my own belief. . .” (Emerson 55).