

# Avoiding Second Person

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One of the main rules of writing formal, academic papers is to avoid using second person. Second person refers to the pronoun *you*. Formal papers should not address the reader directly. However, it can be difficult to write without second person because the word *you* is such a major part of our speech. Fortunately, there are ways to avoid second person without sacrificing the meaning of the text. Below are some suggestions for ways to avoid second person.

## Use the Word *People*

- Second person: You already know that the world is round.
- Revision: Most people already know that the world is round.

## Use the Word *One*

- Second person: You may think this would be impossible.
- Revision: One may think this would be impossible.

## Use *Someone* or *Somebody*

- Second person: You may feel compelled to argue against this point.
- Revision: Someone may feel compelled to argue against this point.

## Remove an Unnecessary *You*

- Second person: You should first make sure everything is set up correctly.
- Revision: First, make sure everything is set up correctly.

## Rearrange the Sentence

- Second person: After reading this paper, you will be able to understand how a helicopter is constructed.
- Revision: This paper will describe how a helicopter is constructed.