

## CONSISTENCY OF PERSON

### Consistency of person

Consistency of person—closely related to consistency of number—means using the same **person** or indefinite pronoun throughout the sentence whenever possible.

- **First person** is the most personal and informal: (singular) **I**, (plural) **we**
- **Second person** speaks directly to the reader: (singular and plural) **you**
- **Third person** is the most formal and most frequently used in college writing: (singular) **He, she, it, one, a person, an individual, a student**, and so on

**Note:** Any person, place, or thing, as well as any indefinite pronoun like **one, anyone, someone**, and so on is a third-person word. For instance, if you start writing in the first person **I** don't jump suddenly to the second person **you**. Or if you are writing in the third person **they**, don't shift unexpectedly to **you**.  
**Look at the examples.**

Inconsistent	Consistent
<p>One reason that <b>I</b> like living in the city is that <b>you</b> always have a wide choice of sports events to attend. (The most common mistake people make is to let <b>you</b> slip into their writing after they start with another pronoun.)</p>	<p>One reason that <b>I</b> like living in the city is that <b>I</b> always have a wide choice of sports events to attend.</p>
<p><b>Someone</b> dieting should have the help of friends: <b>you</b> should also have plenty of willpower.</p>	<p><b>Someone</b> dieting should have the help of friends: <b>one (or he or she)</b> should also have plenty of willpower.</p>
<p>Students who work while <b>they</b> are going to school face special problems. For one thing, <b>you</b> seldom have enough study time.</p>	<p>Student who work while <b>they</b> are going to school face special problems. For one thing, <b>they</b> seldom have enough study time.</p>