

WAYS TO AVOID “YOU”

There are two reasons to avoid using the second person—**you, your, yours**—in college writing:

1. It is usually too informal for the type of college writing college teachers assign
2. It is nearly always vague or imprecise—you refers to whoever hears or reads the word, but usually when you use it in writing you mean some specific individual or group instead of the general listener or reader.

There are two ways of avoiding the second person:

1. Replacing the you with some noun or pronoun that specifies the person or group you are talking about.
2. Rewriting your sentence so that you are using a new structure that solves the problem by approaching it from a totally different direction.

Read the sample sentence below, and study the various ways of revising it.

Rearrange the furniture.

This sentence has the imperative or “invisible” **you**. Alternative replacement patterns are:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| --must | The designer must rearrange the furniture. |
| --will | A person will then rearrange the furniture. |
| --should | He should now rearrange the furniture. |
| --it is necessary to | It is necessary to rearrange the furniture. |
| --essential | It is then essential to rearrange the furniture. |
| --vital | It is vital to rearrange the furniture. |
| --important | It is very important to rearrange the furniture. |
| --is next | Rearranging the furniture is next. |
| --The ___ must be ___ | The furniture must be rearranged. |
| --The next step is ___ | The next step is rearranging the furniture. |