



Writing Skills

Perspective Consistency

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Perspective Consistency

One of the most common mistakes I see in my students' writing, especially in their persuasive essays, is perspective inconsistency. They will start off writing to the general "you", such as in "roller coasters give you a feeling of fun", and then switch to "one", such as in "because one's body releases endorphins", and may switch again to "we", as in "and that is why we love roller coasters!" This activity works directly on perspective consistency by requiring students to choose a perspective, and then stick to it by modifying a given essay. After students make their modifications in writing and we have reviewed their word choices, I like to give them extra practice by having them read the essay aloud, changing nouns, pronouns, and verbs accordingly, after choosing a second perspective.

Name _____

Date _____

Perspective Consistency

It is important to keep your perspective consistent in your writing. Switching perspectives is one of the most common writing mistakes. When writing a persuasive essay, decide which perspective you want to use. **Then stick to it.**

Directions: The following persuasive essay has inconsistent perspectives. Choose one of the perspectives below. Then cross out all nouns or pronouns inconsistent with the perspective you've chosen and replace them with consistent nouns and pronouns.

(Note: also change corresponding verbs and nouns as needed.)

(Also: keep the first two sentences intact as they provide background facts preceding any opinions.)

- I, me, my, mine, myself
- you, your, yours, yourself, (yourselves--if implying the general "you")
- teenagers, they, their, theirs, them, themselves
- teenagers, we, our, ours, us, ourselves

A new technology, Global Positioning System (GPS), which allows parents to track down their children, has caused a little controversy. Using GPS, parents would be able to pinpoint their kids' location, sometimes without the kid even knowing. This new technology has caused a controversy because teenagers may not want to have your parents tracking oneself like some escaped pet, and it may make you feel that one's parents may not completely trust you. But your parents may feel that it is by all means necessary, as the parents may think it could help them if I was lost or in some sort of danger.

There is an old saying that goes "it's better to be safe than sorry", which may apply to the use of tracking devices in teens' cell phones. You may feel like it is an invasion of privacy, but what if, for example, one was kidnapped, lost, or stuck in a bad part of a town? All of those situations are much bigger problems than just having my parents knowing where I am. Your parents will be able to help you if one finds oneself in any of those situations.

One must consider how one's parents may feel about having no idea where you are. Some may say that using a GPS to track my whereabouts is spying, and that it shows that your parents don't trust you, but one must also consider that perhaps you're not so trustworthy in the first place. I may be going to a place where my parents told me not to go, a place where you may be in danger. If one is going out and your parents are expecting you to call by a certain time, and you don't, and one isn't responding to calls or text messages, then my parents could use the tracking device to find out where I am.

Another advantage of having a tracking device in my cell phone involves peer pressure. If, for example, your friends are pressuring you to go somewhere you don't want to go to do something that one doesn't want to do, I could just say "I can't because my parents are tracking me through my cell phone". One could avoid looking "uncool" or "afraid" by using the excuse that you can't go only because your parents would find out. Teenagers will often respect the "I'll get in trouble with my parents" excuse.

Finally, if you're not going anywhere you're not supposed to be, than why would one mind one's parents knowing where one is? There are several important advantages to my parents using a GPS to track me, and my safety is chief among them. Who knows—maybe when one is an adult and has elderly parents who are at risk, you will want to track your parents using a GPS to make sure they stay safe!



Perspective Consistency—Answer Key

Answer Sample: Perspective of teenagers, they, their, theirs, them, themselves

A new technology, Global Positioning System (GPS), which allows parents to track down their children, has caused a little controversy. Using GPS, parents would be able to pinpoint their kids' location, sometimes without the kid even knowing. This new technology has caused a controversy because teenagers may not want to have **their (your)** parents tracking **them (oneself)** like some escaped pet, and it may make **them (you)** feel that **their (one's)** parents may not completely trust **them (you)**. But **their (your)** parents may feel that it is by all means necessary, as the parents may think it could help them if **their teenager (I)** was lost or in some sort of danger.

There is an old saying that goes “it’s better to be safe than sorry”, which may apply to the use of tracking devices in teens’ cell phones. **Teenagers (You)** may feel like it is an invasion of privacy, but what if, for example, **they were (one was)** kidnapped, lost, or stuck in a bad part of a town? All of those situations are much bigger problems than just having **their (my)** parents knowing where **they are (I am)**. **Their (Your)** parents will be able to help **them (you)** if they find **themselves (one finds oneself)** in any of those situations.

Teenagers (One) must consider how **their (one's)** parents may feel about having no idea where **they (you)** are. Some may say that using a GPS to track **teenagers' (my)** whereabouts is spying, and that it shows that **their (your)** parents don't trust **them (you)**, but **they (one)** must also consider that perhaps **they're (you're)** not so trustworthy in the first place. **They (I)** may be going to a place where **their (my)** parents told **them (me)** not to go, a place where **they (you)** may be in danger. If **teenagers are (one is)** going out and **their (your)** parents are expecting **them (you)** to call by a certain time, and **they (you)** don't, and **they aren't (one isn't)** responding to calls or text messages, then **their (my)** parents could use the tracking device to find out where **they are (I am)**.



Another advantage of having a tracking device in **their (my)** cell phones involves peer pressure. If, for example, **their (your)** friends are pressuring **them (you)** to go somewhere **they (you)** don't want to go to do something that **they don't (one doesn't)** want to do, **they (I)** could just say "I can't because my parents are tracking me through my cell phone". **Teenagers (One)** could avoid looking "uncool" or "afraid" by using the excuse that **they (you)** can't go only because **their (your)** parents would find out. **Other teenagers** will often respect the "I'll get in trouble with my parents" excuse. *(Note: I have found most of my students do not understand the main idea of this paragraph. I always check to make sure they've understood the point made before moving on.)*

Finally, if **teenagers are (you're)** not going anywhere **they're (you're)** not supposed to be, than why would **they (one)** mind **their (one's)** parents knowing where **they are (one is)**? There are several important advantages to **their (my)** parents using a GPS to track **them (me)**, and **their (my)** safety is chief among them. Who knows—maybe when **they are adults (one is an adult)** and **have (has)** elderly parents who are at risk, **they (you)** will want to track **their (your)** parents using a GPS to make sure **their parents (they)** stay safe!

