

Perspectives

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What is a Perspective?

Perspectives are commentaries produced by and for WNIJ listeners, from a panel of regular contributors and from guests. (Hear them weekdays during Morning Edition at 6:50 and 8:50 a.m. and All Things Considered at 4:48 and 6:48 p.m.)

Perspectives should be 90 seconds when read aloud. That's about 250 words.

What should I write about?

What matters to you? Topics range from politics to pets, from parenting to AI, and anything in between!

What happens after I submit my essay?

Perspectives editor Susan Stephens reads all the submissions. If she schedules yours for broadcast, she'll reach out over email. The two of you will go through some edits for clarity and length. Then, you can record at our DeKalb studio, or Susan can give you some guidance to record yourself at home.

When your Perspective is ready to air, you can hear it during Morning Edition and All Things Considered, and you can see it online at wnij.org/Perspectives. Feel free to send along a photo to accompany the web post.





Dan's top tips

Author, NIU writing instructor, and WNIJ *Under Rocks* host Dan Libman has a few best practices to write and polish your Perspective:

Perspectives are not limited to these three elements, but here is one way to think about putting an essay together:

1. Brief introduction: here is what I'm thinking about
2. Here is what happened to me that made me think about this
 - Personal anecdote
 - or
 - Something you read or heard about it
3. The shift
 - Here is how I'm living my life now
 - Or
 - Here is what I am advocating my listener to think/do

- ☐ **Don't lock into your Perspective at the start of writing it. Allow your perspective to change as you write it. It happens all the time and don't be surprised.**
- ☐ **Starting from something that outraged you online? Consider finding something that comes from your organic experiences instead. Your essay will be better for being more authentically yours.**
- ☐ **A little bit of humor or vulnerability goes a long way in making your point more accessible.**

Shorten!

1. Get it all out on paper first
 - Pay no attention to length or style or grammar. You can always fix it later, you absolutely will need to fix it later. But you can't fix what doesn't exist.
2. Cut one word from every sentence, one sentence from every paragraph
3. "The bear way off in the distance over there" can be "The bear in the distance" or "Distantly, the bear..."
4. Often the better stylistic choice will make your essay clearer to listeners. Remember more people will be listening to you than reading you.