

Brooklyn Deep “First Person” Guidelines

1. **Start with a question about neighborhood change:** Stories should be sparked by a question you have about an aspect of your surrounding community, such as your block, your local grocery store, the neighbors, etc. You can be motivated by something that’s annoyed or outraged you, but use your story as an opportunity to find out the real deal beyond your assumptions.
2. **Look to your network:** When thinking about who you should interview for a “First Person” story, you should start within your network. Story sources can be the people you see everyday from your family members to owner of the laundromat you use, for example. Think about who you have unique access to from your story.
3. **Bring your perspective:** As a Central Brooklynite you have a perspective shaped by living in this community. When reporting and asking questions, use your specific point of view to go “deep” and get to the root of what you want to know.
4. **Investigate honestly:** Start with the question, not the answer. This is not an op-ed. Similarly, its not an opportunity to vent or simply reinforce popular attitudes, but a chance to help your neighbors understand their community with more clarity and insight. When asking your questions, be sure to talk to people who may have a different opinion or point of view from yours. Challenge your own assumptions and be open to your having your viewpoint change.
5. **Your story, your voice:** As the title suggests, you should report and write your story from the first person voice. This means you can explicitly refer to yourself using words and phrases involving “I” and/or “we.” This allows the reader to also hear your opinions, thoughts, and feelings throughout the arc of your story.
6. **Be concise, but thorough:** There is no pre-determined length for First Person stories. We expect most First Person pieces to be from 500-1000 words, but that’s a guide, not a rule. You should incorporate pictures, video, or audio components whenever possible.
7. **Be Creative:** A straightforward story is fine. However, don’t be afraid to tell your story in a unique way.
8. **Check your facts:** When a source states something as fact, it’s important to find another source to support that fact. Don’t take things on face value. If your source is verifiably wrong, it will weaken the story and undermine your credibility, not mention the credibility of the source and Brooklyn Deep. If statistics are used in a story, they should also be attributed to a source and double checked.