

Pronouns

*Because a pronoun refers to a noun or takes the place of that noun, make sure that you use the correct pronoun. This way, the reader clearly understands the pronoun and its reference. The noun that a pronoun replaces is called the **antecedent**. Below are some basic rules for pronouns:*

1. Pronouns should agree in number.

- If the pronoun takes the place of a singular noun, you have to use a singular pronoun.

If a student parks a car on campus, he has to buy a parking sticker.

(**Not:** If a student parks a car on campus, they have to buy a parking sticker.)

- **Remember:** The words EVERYBODY, ANYBODY, ANYONE, EACH, NEITHER, NOBODY, SOMEONE, A PERSON, etc., are singular and take singular pronouns.

Everybody ought to do his best.

(**Not:** their best)

Neither of the girls brought her umbrella.

(**Not:** their umbrellas)

2. Pronouns should agree in voice or person.

- If you are writing in the first person (I), don't confuse your reader by switching to the second person (you) or third person (he, she, they, it, etc.).
- Similarly, if you are using the second person, don't switch to first or third person.

When a person comes to class, he should have his homework ready.

(**Not:** When a person comes to class, you should have your homework ready.)

3. Pronouns should refer clearly to a specific noun.

- Don't be vague or ambiguous. The sentences below are examples of vague and ambiguous pronoun references.

Although the motorcycle hit the tree, it was not damaged.
(Is "it" the motorcycle or the tree?)

I don't think they should show violence on TV.
(Who are "they"?)

Vacation is coming soon, which is nice.
(What is nice, the vacation or the fact that it is coming soon?)

George worked in a national forest last summer. This may be his life's work.
(What word does "this" refer to?)

If you put this sheet in your notebook, you can refer to it.
(What does "it" refer to, the sheet or your notebook?)

The Forms and Functions of Personal Pronouns					
	1st Person	2nd Person	3rd Person Masculine	3rd Person Feminine	3rd Person Neuter
Subjective Case Singular (doer of action)	I	you	he	she	it
Subjective Case Plural (doer of action)	we	you	they	they	they
Objective Case Singular (receiver of action)	me	you	him	her	it
Objective Case Plural (receiver of action)	us	you	them	them	them

Possessive Case Singular (without noun)	mine	yours	his	hers	its
Possessive Case Plural (without noun)	ours	yours	theirs	theirs	theirs
Possessive Case Singular (with noun)	my	your	his	her	its
Possessive Case Plural (with noun)	our	your	their	their	their
Compound Personal Singular (reflexive and intensive)	myself	yourself	himself	herself	itself
Compound Personal Plural (reflexive and intensive)	ourselves	yourselves	themselves	themselves	themselves

Lesson