

Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. The antecedent of a pronoun is the word to which the pronoun refers. The pronoun and its antecedent agree in gender and number.

Jane called *her* friend. *Jane* and *her* are both singular and feminine.
John called *his* friend. *John* and *his* are both singular and masculine.

The *girls* finished *their* job. The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.
The *boys* finished *their* job. The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.

The pronoun is masculine (he, his, him) when the antecedent is masculine, and feminine (she, her, hers) when the antecedent is feminine, and neutral (it, its) when the antecedent has no gender association.

A plural pronoun should be used with a compound antecedent joined by *and*.

Mary and Bill ran until *they* were exhausted.

A singular pronoun is used to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*. A plural pronoun is used with two or more plural antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*.

Ben or Tom will give *his* presentation today.
Either the *juniors or the seniors* are singing *their* class song.

When a singular antecedent and a plural antecedent are joined by *or* or *nor*, use a pronoun that agrees with the nearer antecedent.

The boy or his *parents* will present *their* idea.
The parents or the *boy* will present *his* idea.

Use a singular pronoun when a collective noun refers to a group as a single unit. Use a plural pronoun when the collective noun refers to a group's members as individuals.

The *class* decided *it* wanted to do the project.
The *class* stayed in *their* desks.

Use singular pronouns to refer to indefinite pronouns (words like *everybody*, *none*, *nobody*, *someone*) used as antecedents.

Each of the boys had *his* assignment ready.
Everyone on the women's team improved *her* time.
Everybody on the committee had *his or her* own agenda.

Use the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *which*, and *that* with the appropriate antecedents.

Who refers to people and animals that have names.
He is the one *who* committed the crime.

Which refers to animals and things.

The biology *book*, *which* is on the table, was very helpful.

That refers to animals, things and sometimes to people.

The *house that* is on the right is being demolished.

Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement Practice

Circle the correct form of the pronoun.

1. Jane and Sarah said (she, **they**) were too tired to skate any longer.
2. Either Bill or John will bring a sample of (**his**, their) own work.
3. Jane and Jill called (her, **their**) friend.
4. Either Jane or her friends will present (her, **their**) project.
5. Neither Mary nor Susan said (**she**, they) would be there.
6. Every student wants to impress (**his or her**, their) professors.
7. Both John and Jim said (he, **they**) were not exercising regularly.
8. The jury was asked to return to (its, **their**) seats.
9. Please remind each student to bring (**his or her**, their) homework tomorrow.
10. Neither John nor Bob was willing to admit that (**he**, they) had cheated.
11. Each of the girls had (**her**, their) assignment completed.
12. Every worker in this office needs (**his or her**, their) own computer.
13. The committee finally made (**its**, their) decision public.
14. Nobody remembered to bring (**his or her**, their) photos.
15. Neither girl will wear (**her**, their) black pants.
16. Beth and Jane reported the problem to (her, **their**) supervisor.
17. Each teacher turned in (**his or her**, their) grades to the principal.
18. The choir presented (**its**, their) final performance.
19. Either the employees or Ms. Jones will make (their, **her**) presentation.
20. Both Suzi and Beth will try to see (her, **their**) parents over the weekend.

Select the sentence that is incorrect in each group.

1. A. Each of the students should bring his or her text book to the study session.
B. Both Christine and George brought their children with them to the meeting.
C. Everyone wanted to share their observations.
D. When people are interrogated relentlessly, they tend to grow weary.
2. A. John and Jane are combining their money to purchase a larger gift for their parents.
B. Neither Steve nor Gary wanted to present his own ideas.
C. Sandy was the only one in the class who had his or her homework.
D. If anyone wants the tickets, they need to call me tonight.
3. A. The members of the team played their hardest.
B. Bob is one of those teachers who consider themselves privileged to work with students.

- C. The tour guide, as well as the entire group, checked their supply list.
- D. Either my sister or my cousin will bring her video camera.

4.

A. Everyone should write their name on the top of their test.

B. If students need help, they should make an appointment to meet with a tutor.

C. Neither of them will wear her costume once the performance is over.

D. Both girls will try to see their relatives in New York.
5.

A. Nobody in the class completed his or her assignment perfectly.

B. The students, rather than the professor, will present their theory at the conference.

C. Every instructor and every administrator stated his or her opinion.

D. The committee is making their final presentation this evening.
6.

A. The group of student workers are distributing the schedule which was developed.

B. The principal, as well as the teachers, initiated his request for parental help.

C. Every employee must wear his or her identification badge.

D. The mother and the father explained their concern.
7.

A. Either Sally or Christine will present their congratulations to the winner.

B. The students, as well as the principal, expressed their opposition to the board's decision.

C. John, rather than Dianne or Phil, brought his design for the poster.

D. Many of them will see their friends at the conference.
8.

A. If anyone objects to the decision, they should say so now.

B. Everyone was quiet until he or she heard the speaker's controversial remark.

C. The audience showed their boredom by moving around during the presentation.

D. She is the type of student who tries his or her hardest.
9.

A. Anyone who thinks the task seems easy should try it themselves.

B. Neither Ruth nor Betty was late for her appointment.

C. Nobody thought about bringing his or her portfolio.

D. Both Ann and Sarah asked if they could turn her assignment in late.
10.

A. Someone has forgotten to complete their registration form.

B. Joan, as well as both of her sisters, wanted to complete her assignment over the weekend.

C. Neither Greg nor his brothers remembered their password.

D. David and Sarah, as well as John, filed their complaint.

Pronoun Case

There are three pronoun cases.

1. **Subjective Case-** Pronouns used as subjects.
2. **Objective Case-** Pronouns used as objects of verbs or prepositions.
3. **Possessive Case-** Pronouns which express ownership.

Subjective Pronouns	Objective Pronouns	Possessive Pronouns
I	me	my (mine)
you	you	your (yours)
he	him	his
she	her	her (hers)
it	it	its
we	us	our (ours)
they	them	their (theirs)
who	whom	whose

The Subjective Pronouns are categorized into person and number.

Person	Number		
	Singular	Plural	
First	I	we	person(s) speaking
Second	you	you	person(s) spoken to
Third	he she it	they	person(s) spoken about

The pronouns *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, and *which* do not change form.